

Public Secrets

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The slashbait in "Purple Haze" was just so bad I had to write something.

Featured fandoms: eureka

Featured pairings: Allison/Beverly

A.S.S Story codes: ff

Story rating: R

Allison spoke the moment Beverly opened her front door.

"I am not gay," she said.

Beverly smiled. She was good at that. It was, after all, a professional skill. It wouldn't do for a therapist and spy to let her real feelings show. Particularly since, in this case, they probably would have shown in the form of a cackle and a suggestion to prove her wrong the practical way.

"Come in, dear," she said. "I'll make some tea."

Which she did, slowly and carefully and singing some song she didn't quite remember the words to. Which she never would've done had she been by herself. She did it because the delay and excessive homyness would give a visitor time to settle in, calm down and feel as if everything was all right with the world.

In this particular instance, Beverly also took the time to remove her bra and leave her blouse open one button farther than usual.

"So, you were saying?" she said after she'd sat down and while she was pouring Allison's tea.

"What you said," Allison said. "On the PA system. It's not true."

Inwardly, Beverly smiled. Like a cat watching a totally oblivious mouse.

"I *have* apologized for that," she said. "I truly am sorry."

"I know," Allison said. "It's just that..."

"What?"

Beverly stopped pouring, but remained leaned forward. She could see Allison's gaze repeatedly drop towards her cleavage.

"It wasn't *true*," Allison said, with a slight tinge of desperation to her voice.

Beverly leaned back in her comfortable and calm-inspiring armchair.

"You came all the way here just to tell me that?" she asked.

"Yes," Allison said. "I guess."

"Even though you knew I already knew?"

"Yes," Allison repeated. This time, she looked away.

"Tell me," Beverly said, "would you describe yourself as a violent person?"

Allison's eyes snapped back to Beverly.

"What?" she said. "No!"

Beverly sipped her tea.

"So, would you agree that when you came after me with a gun, that was pretty far out of character for you?"

"We were under the influence of the damn pollen," Allison mumbled.

"Even so. Most people only *said* things they wouldn't normally have. Very few became violent. And even if you did become generally violent, why come after me instead of, say, your estranged husband?"

Allison visibly gathered her courage and looked Beverly straight in the eyes. With telltale little flicks downwards.

"You tell me," she said. "You're the psychologist."

Beverly smiled.

"I think," she said, "you came after me because I hit on something that you don't want to admit even to yourself."

Allison snorted.

"So you're saying I'm gay, I just don't know it?"

"Given your marriage and obvious interest in the new sheriff, my guess would be bisexual. As I said on the PA, and for which I have repeatedly apologized."

Allison snorted again, but with far less conviction.

Beverly stayed silent.

After a little while, Allison turned her head to look out the window.

"So how would I tell?" she said. "Try to pick some woman up and see if I like sleeping with her?"

"I would not recommend that as a first step," Beverly said. "To begin with, I think you should just try to admit whatever you're feeling to yourself. Look at a beautiful woman and see how it makes you feel inside."

She waited until Allison's gaze returned to her.

"Much as," she continued, "you've been trying to look down my cleavage ever since you came here."

Allison's gaze quickly moved away again and, to Beverly's amazement, she *blushed*.

"So how does doing that make you feel?" she continued.

"It's... nice," Allison said.

She cleared her throat.

"I've got to think about this," she said.

Beverly smiled.

"You do that," she said. She leaned forward and put a hand on Allison's knee.

"And if it turns out that you want to investigate this side of yourself further," she said, "I'll be more than happy to help."

Several emotions played over Allison's face in rapid succession, and Beverly would've bet good money that all of them were unfamiliar to her.

Allison stood, on slightly shaky legs.

"I'll get back to you," she said.

Beverly hid her disappointment behind another professional smile.

The sheriff's office was dark except for deputy Lupo's desk lamp, in the light of which said deputy was cleaning a handgun almost as long as her forearm. She didn't even look up when Allison entered.

"He's not here," she said.

"Good," Allison said.

That made Jo look up, although her hands kept reassembling the firearm.

"Good?" she said.

Allison leaned against the wall.

"I'm not sure I want to talk to him right now," she said.

"So why'd you come here?" Jo said.

"I...," Allison said.

"Look...," she went on.

"It's...," came next.

"Ok," Jo said. "What did you do?"

Allison looked up at her.

"Did you ever sleep with another woman?" she asked.

Jo's expression clouded over.

"Hey," she said. "That a woman's in the military doesn't have to mean she's a dyke, all right?"

"What?" Allison said, looking confused. "No, no, that's not what I meant!"

Jo looked at her.

"So what did you mean?"

"It's... what Beverly said to the whole town the other night," Allison said.

"Oh, that," Jo said. "Don't worry, nobody's believing that. If you ask me, Beverly just wants into your pants herself."

"I believe her," Allison said.

Jo looked at her.

"Ok," she said. "Nothing wrong with that."

Allison grabbed hold of a chair and sat down.

"I just wanted to talk to somebody female who wasn't Beverly," she said.

Jo worked the mechanism on the handgun, frowned slightly and dropped the thing in a desk drawer.

"Something's not right with that one and I can't find it..." she said. "And yeah, I have."

Allison looked confused.

"You have what?"

"Slept with women."

"Oh," Allison said.

"Well, mostly one woman," Jo amended.

Allison kept silent and waited for details.

"It was the summer just after I got out of the military," Jo said. "I got hired by this rich family as a coach for their daughter. Kennedy, her name was. I thought it'd be a boring job, babysitting a spoiled brat, but I needed to pay the rent so I decided to do my best."

She smiled to herself.

"Boy was I wrong," she said. "She was *really* into the whole fitness and martial arts thing. Only person I ever met who could keep up with me. I was the first coach she'd had who could keep up with *her*. And, she was as gay as a San Francisco Pride parade and really used to getting what she wanted. Which, after the first day or two, was me. In a big way."

Jo shook her head at the memories.

"Damn, that was some summer," she said.

"So what happened?" Allison asked. "Did she dump you or what?"

"This old English guy showed up with a couple of other girls in tow, and Kennedy just went with them. Never heard anything from her since."

"Do you miss her?"

"Yeah," Jo said. "I do. But that's life, you know? Sometimes people go away and don't come back."

Allison gathered her courage.

"If I asked you to kiss me, would you?" she said.

Jo shook her head.

"No," she said.

"You don't find me attractive?"

"You're a really fine-looking woman," Jo said. "You're also kinda my boss' girlfriend, and I like my job."

"We're not..." Allison started saying, but the sentence died under the withering disbelief in Jo's look.

"Ok," Allison said. "I get your point."

She got up from her chair.

"Thanks for the chat," she said.

"You're welcome," Jo said.

Allison started to leave, but hesitated with her hand on the doorknob.

"What if I wasn't seeing Jack?" she said.

Jo looked at her.

"Go," she said.

"Right," Allison said. She went.

Beverly waited half an hour before she opened the door.

She'd been in the kitchen, getting a glass of water and being unable to sleep, when she saw Allison's car stop in her driveway. Which made her heart jump, no matter how much she tried to keep her feelings in check. She sighed. Falling for a target was hardly behavior worthy of her. So she waited, determined to let Allison make the first move. While she waited, she paced. She tried to think things through. Was she appropriately alluringly dressed? Were the sheets in her bed fresh, just in case things went as she hoped they would? Was the house clean? Was she going insane?

After half an hour she couldn't take it any more. She wrapped her dressing gown closer around herself and headed for the front of the house.

"Are you going to sit out there all night?" she said after she opened the door.

"Maybe," Allison said. "You can see the sunrise from here, right?"

She was sitting at the edge of the porch, her very shapely legs stretched out down the stairs. Her skirt had ridden up, and more than half her thighs were visible to Beverly's hungry eyes.

"Yeah, you can," she said through a throat suddenly dry. "What are you doing here?"

"Thinking."

"About what?"

"Halle Berry's legs."

Not really the answer Beverly had expected. She sat down at the top of the porch stairs too.

"Not that those aren't worth thinking about," she said, "but why?"

"Back in the early 90s," Allison said, "she was in a movie of the Flintstones. Which I never saw. But there was a music video with B52s with footage from the movie that got played on MTV. And *that* one I saw. A lot."

"She was in it, I suppose?"

"Just for a few moments," Allison said. "I almost wore that bit of tape out. My friends thought I was totally weird. And to this day I'd never wondered *why* I got so obsessed."

"You found her attractive."

"Like you wouldn't believe," Allison said. "And yet it just didn't occur to me that that was what it was. Not until tonight. It's as if I had this huge blind spot that didn't let me see that, hey, *this* feeling is the same as *that* feeling, only this time you're with a woman and that time you were with a man."

"It's not that uncommon," Beverly said.

"I feel so stupid," Allison said.

"It's hard to see something that the culture you grew up in doesn't admit exists," Beverly said.

"I guess," Allison said. "I also figured something else out."

Beverly turned to look straight at her.

"Oh? What?"

"You want me. Badly."

Before Beverly managed to stop herself, she'd turned to look the other way and

started to blush.

"That's what made you start spouting all those secrets," Allison went on. "As a pretext. As a way to tell me without actually *telling* me."

With a sinking feeling, Beverly realized that Allison was probably correct. Those almost certainly had been the feelings brought on by the influence of the mind-altering pollen. She made an effort to regain control of herself.

"So, what if I do?" she said.

"I might want to experiment," Allison said.

Beverly turned to look at her again, stunned. Again, that was not what she had expected.

"I know," Allison said. "That's not how it's supposed to go. I'm supposed to deny it for some time, finally decide it's true, convince myself I've fallen in love with some woman, have a tempestuous relationship that falls apart messily and finally realize that, really, nothing much has changed. I'm still me. And do you know what?"

Beverly shook her head, still not sure what was going on.

"All of that seems like an awful lot of work and misery just to get to bed another woman."

"So," Beverly said, finally seeing where Allison was going, "instead of all that you just want to sleep with me."

Allison put her hand on Beverly's thigh.

"Maybe I've lived in Eureka for too long," she said. "Maybe the attitude of all these mad scientists have rubbed off on me. Here's a new phenomenon! Let's experiment with it and see what happens!"

She slid her hand a little further up the leg.

"So, Beverly Barlowe," she said. "Want to be an experimental subject?"

"Are you sure this is a good idea?" Beverly said. She made no attempt to remove Allison's hand.

"Absolutely not," Allison said. "But at least it's an experiment that's unlikely to get the universe unraveling around us."

Beverly smiled and made a decision. After all, Allison was a very beautiful woman. And she might be another way of getting into Section Five. She reached out her hand and ran a finger along Allison's lips.

"So," she said, "do you want to do it right here or should we go inside and find a bed before we start experimenting?"

Allison stood up.

"I suggest we leave the exhibitionism for a later experiment," she said.

Together, they went inside.