[Theme song in background]

[on overlapping tracks]

**Molly:** Hey! Welcome to Gender Reveal.

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**Molly:** Hey. Welcome to Gender Reveal, a podcast where folks of all genders and no gender answer intrusive personal questions, and, hopefully, get us a little bit closer to understanding what the hell gender is. I'm your host and resident Gender Detective, Molly Woodstock.

[Theme song ends]

**Molly:** Today you are listening to the first ever episode of Gender Reveal! Thanks so much for being here. We're excited to be here and excited that you're giving us a shot! So, usually on Gender Reveal, we're gonna bring in some really cool trans, non-binary, queer, genderqueer, gender non-conforming folks to share their experiences and their insights into the world of gender. There's gonna be activists, educators, artists, musicians, comedians, and other just generally rad human beings. As a queer and genderqueer journalist, I have a lot of thoughts about gender, and a lot of questions, and a tendency to sort of unofficially interview folks who are also thinking a lot about gender. So if I meet another non-binary person, I want to ask them a bunch of questions about how they experience the world as a non-binary person, and I thought "What if I just formalized this?" And here we are, on this podcast! Welcome!

[Music interlude]

**Molly:** Before we get started, I need to tell you about the folks that are literally making Gender Reveal possible. First up, we have all of our buddies on Patreon! Thanks so, so much to all of you. If you're up to donate $1 more per month to help us fund the show, head on over to https://www.patreon.com/gender, and if you donate $5 or more, I'll send you some cool stickers. But even $1 per month really, really helps us cover our costs, and I really, really cannot express how much it means to me that you're willing to support the show.

Next up, thank you so much to GladRags! Did you that the average menstruating person uses around 12,000 disposable pads and tampons in their lifetime? I'm willing to bet that, like, all 12,000 of those experiences are pretty uncomfortable. But with GladRags, you can use their cloth menstrual pads and their XO Flo menstrual cups instead; they're so comfortable, they're so convenient, they're honestly so cute, and they last for years, and years, and years, so you'll never have that moment where you realize you're out of tampons, and your period just started because you won't need tampons anymore. And now, Gender Reveal listeners can get $5 off their order of a cloth pad or menstrual cup with the promo code "GENDER".

Speaking of comfy, I just tried my first pair of TomboyX underwear, and holy crap, y'all, I'm totally hooked. I think this underwear is really perfect for folks all across the gender spectrum because they have all sorts of colors, and patterns, and cuts; they have bikini, they have 9-inch boxer brief, they have boyshorts, they have any kind of "b"-started underwear you could want. And they have it all in sizes from extra small to 4X. I think it's really the perfect way to affirm your gender without anyone even necessarily knowing. And you can use the code "TOMBOYS" at checkout for 15% off your order at <https://tomboyx.com/>. That's 15% off your order with the code "TOMBOYS".

Okay friends, well as I said, this podcast will typically feature cool trans guests, but today we're gonna do something a little bit different because on this show we're gonna have some really personal conversations, and we're gonna be talking about gender with people who think about gender all of the time, who've been thinking about it for years, who think about it, and talk about it, and write about it professionally every day. And it's really important to me that folks are able to use the words they're the most comfortable with to describe their experiences without having to pause to explain what they mean. But at the same time, words are complicated, and we don't all have the same vocabulary, we don't all have Ph.D.s in gender studies, and language about gender can be new and confusing, and that's okay. This isn't a podcast that's just for people who already understand everything there is to know about gender, and even if you feel like you get it all now, the terminology is changing constantly, so maybe you won't get it all tomorrow. So just to make sure that everyone's starting from something closer to the same page, we want to present this little pre-episode glossary.

[music interlude]

**Narrator:** The glossary.

The glossary.

The glossary.

The glossary.

The glossary.

**Molly:** So what we're gonna do is spend a little bit of time trying to catch y'all up to speed, going over very basic gender terms. If you know that already, if you spend a lot of time in queer and trans spaces, that's rad, go straight to the next episode! We'll meet you there, it'll be good. But if you are shaky with your gender terminology, and you haven't been in these spaces before, this is the time to get out a pen and learn some gender vocab!

**Narrator:** The glossary.

[ding]

**Narrator:** Sex.

**Molly:** Biological sex is the thing assigned to you at birth based on what external genitalia your doctor sees. So, if your doctor looks down at you, and you're a tiny baby, the doctor sees a penis, you're assigned male at birth. The doctor sees a vulva, you're assigned female at birth. Most of the time, a baby will be assigned male at birth or female at birth, but it is worth noting that about 1 in 100 babies are born intersex, and that could mean that they have ambiguous external genitalia, which means the doctor looks down and is like "I don't know what's going on there", they could have, say, a vulva and internal testes, where the outside and the inside don't match what we would traditionally expect to see, or they could have a chromosome variation, like XXY, for example. And so, even though biological sex is thought of as a binary, it's actually not a binary either, but that's the thing you're given when you're born.

[ding]

**Narrator:** Gender.

**Molly:** So, if your biological sex is based on the way your body looks as a tiny baby, what's gender? Well, gender is defined, according to our favorite dictionary, Merriam-Webster, as "the state of being male or female, typically used with reference to social and cultural differences, rather than biological ones". Gender is doing the things that society and culture think of as being male or female. It has to do with if you wear nail polish, if you play football, it has to do with the way you speak and act and interact with people in the world. So basically, sex is all about the way your body looks, and gender is about how you present to the world, how people interpret you, and it is really nebulous and hard to define, and that's kind of the point. If it were easy to define what gender was, this podcast wouldn't exist.

[ding]

**Narrator:** Cisgender.

**Molly:** A cisgender person is someone whose gender matches the sex they were assigned at birth. So if your doctor looked down, saw a penis, said "It's a boy!" and then you lived to be 100 years old, and that whole time you identified as male, you're cisgender. Some cisgender people think that the word cisgender is a slur. It's not. It's just a word. If someone calls you cisgender, don't be offended. Thank you.

[ding]

**Narrator:** Transgender.

**Molly:** A transgender person is someone whose gender does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. When most people hear the word 'transgender', they think of binary transgender, either someone who was assigned male at birth but identifies as female or someone who was assigned female at birth but identifies as male. But there is also non-binary transgender. And, hold onto your hats because that's a long and confusing one.

[ding]

**Narrator:** Non-binary.

**Molly:** So, non-binary is actually an umbrella term for any gender identity that doesn't fit neatly within the gender binary. So if you don't identify as male, and you don't identify as female, then you're somewhere in the non-binary umbrella. Non-binary is also sometimes called 'genderqueer', which is another word for non-binary; it means the same thing. There are also hundreds, and probably thousands of gender identities in the non-binary umbrella. For example, you could be transmasculine, which means you were assigned female at birth but now are more masculine than feminine. Conversely, transfeminine: assigned male at birth, now more feminine than masculine. You could be genderfluid, which means you sort of oscillate around the gender spectrum, and present different ways on different days, and feel different ways on different days. You could be agender, which means you don't have any feeling of gender at all. You could be bigender, you could be trigender. The point is that there are hundreds of gender identities fitting within the non-binary umbrella, but for convenience's sake, most people will just say "I'm non-binary", or "I'm genderqueer".

[ding]

**Narrator:** Pronouns.

**Molly:** So, in English, if someone's a man, we call them 'he', and if someone's a woman, we call them 'she', but if they're non-binary, what do we call them? Well, every non-binary person chooses the pronoun or pronouns that they feel fits them the best. So in some cases, non-binary folks might use he or she pronouns, but in many cases, they choose other pronouns, ones that they feel more accurately reflect their gender identity. The most common non-binary pronoun is they/them. For example, "I talked to them, and they're doing great!" You might hear the argument that 'they' is a plural pronoun, you might even have been told in school that you would be marked wrong if you used 'they' to refer to one person, but I promise you, it's 2018, the dictionary's on board, we're all on board, 'they' can be a single person. If it's really confusing to you, you could just use that person's name. Like, "I talked to Liza, and Liza's doing great!" But, I promise that if you practice with they/them pronouns, pretty soon it'll feel just as natural as he or she. There are other pronouns that non-binary folks might ask you to use, for example, ze/hir, ze/zir, xe/xem, other things that don't start with 'z'. That's on a case-by-case basis, and if someone wants you to use one of those pronouns, they'll tell you. Here's the thing about gender: you can't know, just from looking at someone, what gender they identify as. There's really just no way to know. I know you think you know, but you don't really know. So until you know what pronouns someone prefers, the safest thing to do is use they/them. If they're a stranger, and you can't tell what their gender is, you don't really ever have to know. Like, you can just mind your own business. But if it's someone that you'll need to talk to, or talk about, it's actually polite to just ask someone what their pronouns are. I know it seems rude, but no one expects you to read their mind. Really, it's so okay to ask someone their pronouns. They'll probably be grateful that you asked them their pronouns! If you want to be even more low-key, you can introduce yourself with your pronouns; for example, like, "I'm Bob, I use he/him pronouns. What's your name?" And maybe they'll tell you their pronouns like that! Sometimes, non-binary folks wear little pins with their pronouns, so if you see a little pin, you could check that! But really, we don't need to expect people to wear pins with their pronouns all the time. You can just ask them their pronouns if it seems relevant, and if it doesn't seem relevant, just mind your own business.

[ding]

**Narrator:** Queer.

**Molly:** So, Gender Reveal is primarily about gender, but it's also very much about queerness, and in the past couple of months, both of my parents have asked me what 'queer' means, so maybe we need to define what 'queer' means. 'Queer' is an umbrella term that can include anyone on the LGBTQ spectrum. You can be gay and identify as queer. You can be bisexual and identify as queer. You can be pansexual and identify as queer. More importantly, you can just be queer and not use any of those other words. One of the great things about being queer is that you don't have to pin down exactly who you're attracted to. It is a way to recognize that because gender is like a fluid spectrum, and sexuality is a fluid spectrum, maybe we don't need to define *exactly* who we're attracted to in a specific way. Maybe we just say we're queer because we know we can be attracted to more than one type of gender. Maybe you've heard queer used as a slur, used by straight people against gay people. 'Queer' is a term that's being reclaimed by queer people, and it's no longer an insult, especially if a queer person uses it to define themselves. I've been asked by many straight people if it's okay to call people queer, and my answer would be, if they identify as queer, it's okay to say that they're queer because they're saying they're queer. But you wouldn't want to just see a bunch of people and say "Hey! Look at that bunch of queers!" Don't do that. But if they say "Hi, I'm a queer person," it's okay for you to call them a queer person because that's who they are.

[ding]

**Narrator:** Female-bodied?!

**Molly:** Sometimes, you'll hear well-meaning folks use the terms 'male-bodied' or 'female-bodied' in an attempt to say 'assigned male at birth' or 'assigned female at birth'. The truth is that there's no one way to have a male body or one way to have a female body. So if you're trying to talk about folks that were born with, say, a penis and testicles and XY chromosomes, feel free to say "assigned male at birth". Honestly, most of the time, you don't really need to talk about people in those terms. Like how often do you need to define a person in that way? But if you do, just keep in mind that it's more polite to say "assigned male at birth" than it is to say "male-bodied".

[ding]

**Narrator:** TERF.

**Molly:** TERF stands for "Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminist". It's a group of mostly lesbian feminists who believe that trans women are actually men. TERFs are bad. Don't be a TERF. That's all I've got for you. That's the end.

[ding]

**Narrator:** Femme?

**Molly:** There is a lot of discussion in queer and trans communities about what the word 'femme' means right now. Some people use it to mean a queer woman. Some people use it to mean a feminine woman. Some people say it can only be used by queer people. Some people say it can only be used by trans people. It's a mess. But all I wanna say right now is we're not gonna give you a definition of 'femme' because no one can agree on one right now. And speaking of which, none of these definitions should be taken as the single source of wisdom that is permanent and unchanging. The language of queerness is always changing and evolving, and as the show goes on, we'll try to keep you as updated as possible. If you hear a word that you'd like to call us out and say "hey, there's maybe a better way to say that," feel free to get in touch with us because we're learning along with you. And, so just be patient with other people, be patient with yourself, be patient with us, and we will all learn together.

[music interlude]

**Molly:** Well that's gonna do it for today's show. Thanks for joining us! Now that you're armed with new gender knowledge, be sure you subscribe to Gender Reveal so you can catch our upcoming interview with musician Nicholas Cummins of Fits, which should be available in your feed right now. If not, it'll be there any moment. Nicholas toured with PWR BTTM for a while, so we'll talk about that, we'll talk about women-only spaces, we'll talk about being interviewed by Pitchfork as a non-binary person, we'll talk about all sorts of stuff! I love this interview so much, I feel so lucky that we got to do it, and I really think you'll love it, too.

Do you still have questions about gender that you'd like answered on the show? Honestly, I don't blame you because that was like ten minutes, and we can't possibly cover everything right now. So, the good news is that we'll keep answering listener questions as we go along. So, if you'd like to send us your question, email at gendereveal@gmail.com. You can also DM us on Twitter @gendereveal. Speaking of which, if you're excited about the podcast, there are a few things you can do that would help us so much to get this podcast off the ground. First and foremost, please tell your friends, tell your family, tell your coworkers, tell strangers on the bus, just tell anyone you can that you think might want to learn more about gender. Secondly, if you're listening in the Apple Podcast app, could you please just scroll down a little bit and give us a five-star review? It is so easy, and it is truly one of the best ways for folks to find us if we can climb those iTunes rankings. Lastly, if you are able to donate a dollar or more on Patreon at www.patreon.com/gender, it really helps us cover our costs. I know we have sponsors, but it's actually still not covering our costs, [laughs] so if you could help us out, I'd really appreciate it. Maybe one day we won't have to have sponsors, but in the meantime, we really appreciate even your $1 a month donation.

Today's show was edited by Liza Yeager with help from me, Molly Woodstock. Our logo is by the talented Michelle Leigh, and our incredible theme song is from the legendary Breakmaster Cylinder. Thanks again to Gladrags and TomboyX for sponsoring this show, I love both of these companies very much, and I hope you will support them so they can continue to support us. And thanks so much again for listening; I'm really excited that you're all here! Bye!