**Tuck:** The Bistitchual Podcast is brought to you by John and Kelsi, two crafty queer Canadians. Tune in biweekly for real-life ramblings, Zodiac quizzes, work-in-progress check-ins, and tips, tricks, and other fiber tidbits, along with the occasional crafty guest to discuss all things yarn-related. Hang out in the Bistitchual Discord server to make new queer fiber friends, show off your work, and pop into the bimonthly Stitch Night. Find them on Instagram [@BistitchualPodcast](https://www.instagram.com/bistitchualpodcast/) or at [BistitchualPodcast.ca](https://bistitchualpodcast.ca/).

[*Gender Reveal* theme music starts]

**Tuck:** Welcome to *Gender Reveal*, a podcast where we hopefully get a little bit closer to understanding what the *hell* gender is. I’m your host and resident gender detective, Tuck Woodstock.

[*Gender Reveal* theme music ends]

**Tuck:** Hey everyone, I hope you're all hanging in there. We are finally wrapping up Cisgender Day of Visibility, and I saved this chat for last, because honestly I feel somewhat uncomfortable with having this interview as part of the cis person series. I also feel like it's not really my business to decide on that, so this interview both is and is not canonically part of Cis Day of Visibility—it is… Schrödinger’s Chat! [Ba dum tss sound effect] Anyway, this week on the show we are speaking with author Carmen Maria Machado. Carmen was an absolute dream to interview, despite me high-key gender detective-ing her the entire time.

**Carmen [voice clip]:** I would love the idea of like, someone looking at me and not knowing if I was a man or a woman, but like, I’m not that person, like, that’s not me.

**Tuck:** We talked about doing a press tour for your trauma, and about the horrors of living in a gendered body. We also talk about ghosts touching, and talk kind of a lot about vampire sex.

**Carmen [voice clip]:** Carmilla is just like giving ladies orgasms left and right.

**Tuck:** I just want to note that this conversation was recorded back in late May, so when you hear Carmen mention the helicopter story, that was before Emily VanDerWerff’s essay came out about that. If you don't know what we’re talking about here, we actually have a whole bonus episode in our feed about that very subject. Also, at one point you're gonna hear me say that group project line again. I’m so sorry, I guess it was just really working for me when I was recording the season.

Before we get to all that, I want to let you know that our merch shop is fully restocked with new August designs, including a bunch of stuff that says “not girl summer” on it, and a sticker with a bird that's saying something about how they don't need to educate you on their identity. And also, trans bike shorts. That's all at [Bit.ly/GenderMerch](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cjelg9%5CDesktop%5Cbit.ly%5Cgendermerch), with all proceeds being split between the artist and a trans org of the artist’s choosing. We’ve also got a TheyMail message for you today. This message is from Max Burns UX, and it says:

“Need a new website, but don't know where to start? Max Burns UX can transform your old, clunky website to a slick, new, easy-to-navigate one. Max is a queer and trans business owner who offers discounted rates to others in the queer and trans community. He specializes in creating better user experiences and more comfortable digital spaces for other small businesses and nonprofits. Reach out to Max via [MaxBurnsUX.com](https://maxburnsux.com/).”

[*Gender Reveal* theme music starts]

**Tuck:** Carmen Maria Machado is the author of the award-winning short story collection *Her Body and Other Parties*—which I just reread; it's fucking amazing—and the bestselling memoir *In the Dream House*.

[*Gender Reveal* theme music ends]

**Tuck:** The way we always start the show is by asking, in terms of gender, how do you describe yourself?

**Carmen:** Um… great question. That is a question with a very long answer, which I guess is appropriate for this podcast. [Laughs]

**Tuck:** Yes.

**Carmen:** The short answer is I am more or less a cisgender woman. I feel like my relationship with that idea is very flexible, and definitely changes, and has changed, and I feel a lot of ways about it that feel very inarticulate and strange. And I’m also partnered with two nonbinary folks, so I feel like gender is a sort of, a lovely space of inquiry in my household. So, the short answer is I am more or less a cisgendered woman who uses she/her pronouns. But the sort of long answer is I don't know, and I feel like I’m sort of constantly reevaluating that.

**Tuck:** Yeah. How has being partnered with nonbinary people changed the way that you think about gender, and including your own gender, if it has?

**Carmen:** Sure. Well, I mean, so my spouse, who I’ve been with now for…eight years? I, yeah, wow, okay, sorry, I’ve been with her for eight years, and—I’m just like sitting here doing the math, because I feel like my brain is, I have COVID brain, but I was like, “Oh my god, we have been together for so long.” Yeah, so when we first met, she did not identify as nonbinary, and sort of over the course of our relationship that has changed. And so, I sort of got to see kind of firsthand a person having an ongoing conversation with themselves, you know, during the process of trying to figure out exactly what they want their gender to be and how they want to present and, sort of, you know, in terms of fashion, and hair, and just all that stuff. And so I’ve sort of gotten—been really lucky to get to kind of see that process happening because from the inside, you know, in this sort of more organic way.

And I really appreciated her vulnerability, and sort of talking very openly about what she's experiencing, and making decisions about presentation, and, you know, I'm also the clothing person in the house, so it was a lot of her being like, “I think I want to dress differently,” and I'm like, “All right, here we go, this is my sweet spot.” I was like, “All right, new wardrobe, we’re figuring this out, we’re doing this.” So I feel like it’s been this really interesting sort of path that’s been really rewarding and pleasurable, that I feel very lucky to have been with her on that journey. And then also to kind of get a piece of it for myself, and begin to really think about these questions about “What am I?”, which I feel like is something that I’m always thinking about in all kinds of ways, but it’s also very relevant for gender.

**Tuck:** Yeah. You talked about your spouse having a journey of fashion as part of their gender journey. As you’re thinking about your gender, there’s so many different ways to approach what we mean when we're talking about gender, right? Like it’s not a static, observable thing. And so, is that like, “’'m thinking about how I want to present,” or is that “I’m thinking about what words I use to describe myself,” or “I’m thinking about just the way that I like carrying myself,” you know? Because I’m curious what that exploration looks like for you.

**Carmen:** Sure. So some of it, I mean some of it is actually this, what I feel like is almost like, an unattainable piece of it, which is the way that I present to other people. So, like, I am a fat woman. I have a very large chest, I present very clearly as a woman. And it’s funny, I’ve recently uncovered these photos that I took of myself where I had given myself a haircut, and I cut my hair really short, and then I kind of bound my chest. So I was in theater in college, I was in a Shakespeare troupe, and it was a Shakespeare troupe with a lot of women, and almost no female roles because it was Shakespeare. So almost entirely, I played male roles, and I was sort of learning how to bind for the purposes of doing these roles onstage. And so, at some point I bound my chest, and put on a white tee, and drew a little mustache on my face, and had this haircut, and I remember really marveling at the way that in the photo I looked—I didn't look exactly masculine, but I definitely felt this—it was really interesting, and like, kind of sexual, and there was something very provocative about it that I found really fascinating.

And as I’ve gotten older, it’s become harder and harder to do that, you know, I feel like in some ways my body has sort of bound me to this female presentation, and I know that there are like fat butches and curvy butches… like, I understand that, but for me personally, it’s just, there’s a lot of, like, weirdness around how I feel so feminine because of my body. So for me, that part of it feels almost like I can't do anything about that? I feel kind of like it’s a thing I can't really affect, like how people look at me. I always was like…. I would love the idea of like, someone looking at me and not knowing if I was a man or a woman, but like, I’m not that person, like, that’s not me.

And so, yeah, for me it’s also about presentation, it’s like, do I want to be butch or femme? And I definitely do both, because I do really love like sort of very high femme fashion. I wear a lot of glitter and caftans and a lot of, you know, a lot of big jewelry, and it's this piece of my identity that's been very, you know, sort of ongoing. But I also like, if you look at my author photo, it's a very, very butch author photo, and I *love* that photo of myself because it feels like there's something about the sort of severity and masculinity of that photo that feels very true to some piece of me as well. And so, I feel like with clothing and presentation I’m sort of, I sort of vacillate in this really interesting way back and forth.

And I’ve also noticed that like, since COVID has begun—I mean, I haven’t worn makeup in, god, over a year at this point because I’ve just, you know…. And I normally do, when I like, do events, or I do things, but I feel like COVID has also brought out this sort of casual butch energy from me that is sweats and tanks, because I'm just like, “I just can't be bothered.” Just, you know, like all of us, I think, I was like, “No more hard pants. No more, you know, I just want to be comfortable.” So I feel like there’s this, I just have this energy where I'm sort of moving back and forth. I mean, I love the high femme look and I feel like that’s sort of what a lot of people know from me or know of me, but I also just find that butch, more sort of masculine, or masc-of-center energy really potent, and really provocative, for me for presenting that way, even though I do have the body I have.

**Tuck:** Yeah, so much came up for me when you were talking. We’ve definitely had several guests who are trans—all trans people of color, now that I think about it—who talk about existing as a fat person and how that affects the way that their body is gendered. People who were assigned different genders at birth are all sort of grappling with what you're talking about of, like, the inability to have their body read by society in the same way that a thin person might. And that's definitely a thing that trans people talk about, and so I just wanna like, reflect that back to you. But yes, that's not something that I experience, but that is something that I hear a lot on this podcast and is something that I think is so important, when trans people are sort of pushing back against this idea that there is one way to look trans and that is like, a thin, white, David Bowie androgynous person. Because of that, like, thing, that we should let everyone be whomst they want to be regardless of their body.

Yeah, well, a hard pivot, because I wanted to ask you: your short story “Inventory,” famously a story takes place entirely in sex scenes, the majority of which are during a pandemic. And in it, a CDC employee says the virus is only passing through physical contact, so if people would just stay apart it would go away, but it doesn't go away. The protagonist sleeps with many people over the course of the pandemic, and with the knowledge and the experiences we have now, is living through a pandemic more or less horny than you thought it would be when you wrote this story?

**Carmen:** [Laughs] It’s so funny, because I get asked about that story a lot, and I keep thinking to myself, “How would I have written that story differently post-COVID?” And I do feel like I would make some adjustments. I mean, I think it's also hard for me to answer that question because I am also a person who's partnered during COVID. Like, if I had been alone during COVID, I am not sure. I mean, I feel like I was able—because I had, you know, a spouse, and then also had a partner move in with us and, you know, I had, I think, a sufficiently horny COVID experience. [Both laugh] But it's funny because I do date, and it was weird how I went from going on dates and being in the world to suddenly not at all. And there was this weird stir-crazy quality to, you know, being not able to see other people or touch other people or go out with other people. There's something really interesting about how that kind of creates the sense in you of loss. And I'm sure that's even more heightened for people who are just dating, right, and were in the middle of their dating life and suddenly were not able to do that anymore.

Yeah, I don't know. So, I guess it's less, but I mean, it's less horny than I anticipated, but I do feel like in that story part of the problem—not even in terms of sex, but just in terms of human contact—people are just unable to stay apart from each other. We crave touch, we crave social interaction. I miss small talk, you know. At some point early on in COVID, I was like, “Man, I miss just having a little chat with a stranger.” So I feel like the true thing about “Inventory” is that people really struggle to stay apart from each other and that human contact is so, whether sexual or not, is so necessary that like, people will risk their lives to do it, which I think is pretty true. I think that remains pretty true.

**Tuck:** Yeah, it was interesting, or has been interesting during COVID, to see the people who risked their lives for touch and then people who were like, “I’ve been alone for a year and I just put a blanket around a cardboard box and they’re my boyfriend now,” you know? But I was rereading *Her Body and Other Parties* yesterday, and thinking about liminality because you talk so much about liminality, how it appears in your work. And when I think about liminality, I think about my own identity, like as someone who is in a liminal space between genders, also as someone who is in a liminal space between being a white person and a person of color. Is that something that you relate to as well, of having identities that exist in liminal spaces?

**Carmen:** Yes. I feel like I exist entirely in the liminal space.

**Tuck:** Same!

**Carmen:** At this point I feel like it's a cliché. I always get really stressed out when I say liminal, because I feel like such an asshole, but like, I really cannot think of a more accurate word to describe every piece of me. Like, my racial identity, my gender identity, my sexual identity, like it just all feels like it exists in this middle space that just resolves itself in various ways at different times, and sort of is flexible and moves, and I feel like it's sort of a permanent state of being, for me, which is weird. I think it's why I write work that also exists in that space, because I just feel like I exist in a ghost land. And so that’s just the kind of work I want to write, is I want to write about being in this nowhere place, or everywhere place, or both. It's just this… yeah, I mean, you know. It’s just like a very strange sort of place to be.

**Tuck:** Yeah, but it's also such a lonely place to be, and so it's nice to see other people occupying it, right? To be like, “Okay, so I am not the only person in this weird ghost void.”

**Carmen.** It's true, it's true. And I mean, I think there is something really comforting about when you meet other people, just having a conversation with another person who shares some piece of that with you. And yeah, that feeling of not being alone, and being able to reach out. It's like, what’s that expression, like, “My ghost touches your ghost”? I feel like that’s such a magical thing when that happens, is that sensation. That yeah, you suddenly feel not alone, and you feel like this sort of ineffable piece of you that’s really hard to identify is contacting someone else’s spirit, and there’s something really beautiful about that that I find helpful, I guess.

**Tuck:** Yeah, I love that! [Laughs] It's a little ghost touch. Just two lil ghosts touchin’. [Both laugh]

Oh! Well, I mentioned to some friends when I was doing this interview and asked people if they had questions for you, because a bunch of my friends are huge fans of yours. A lot of the questions had to do with the process around writing *In the Dream House*, which, for listeners, is a memoir about abuse, and the ways that you took care of yourself during that process. So my friend Tehya, who has been on the show, and wh’’s a therapist, said something that I really liked: “It’s wild to be a memoir author. On one hand you’re sharing your entire insides for people to consume, and then you have to deal with people casually bringing up your most tender bits in passing. Like, it’s like people yelling the catchphrases of actors at them, except the catchphrase is your trauma.”

**Carmen:** Mm, mmhm! It is exactly like that. [Laughs]

**Tuck:** Yeah. And so, what was it like to not only dive into the trauma to write the book, but then have to relive that trauma during a press tour for that book, in which the press tour is like, “Talk about the worst moments of your worst relationship”?

**Carmen:** Yeah. Well, it is, as you can imagine, very difficult and kind of shitty. It’s weird, because it also got cut off really abruptly by COVID. So I was like, on tour on tour on tour, and I was sort of staring down many more months of touring, and then all of a sudden, boom, it just got cut off really quickly. And then I was just alone with my thoughts, which was even more terrifying. [Laughs]

Yeah, I mean it was, it was a really emotionally difficult book to write as I'm sure you can imagine, and the tour was similarly difficult. And yeah, there’s just something about that process of having to sort of publicly talk about your life, but then also be like, “I’m a human being who does have some privacy and some boundaries,” you know? It's like, you do know some of my most intimate secrets, but please do not tell me that you know my most intimate secrets because I can't handle that. Like, just talk to me like I’m somebody else. It’s a weird dynamic. And this is just true as a reader, also, it’s like, you can know about someone’s life, but you don't walk up to them and just ask them to talk about it, you know? It’s kind of a privilege to get access to it in that way, and so you have to be sort of thoughtful about how you ask questions and what you sort of assume about the person, even though you have read this book. So yeah, it’s a really odd dynamic for sure, and very different than fiction.

**Tuck:** Yeah. So, you know, trans people are really kind of the most obvious subjects of the horrors of living in a gendered body, which is your main thing, I would go to say. So I'm just curious, especially living with trans people, is that something that you've thought about including in future work, or thought about including in past work?

**Carmen:** Yes and no. Yes, in the sense that, obviously it is a very obvious piece of it, and no in the sense that I don't think I felt comfortable. Like, I think for all of my questions about gender, I don't feel like—I don't identify as trans, and I would feel really… I would be nervous to sort of fuck it up in a way that would feel untrue. I mean, I will say that there is a trans character in my graphic novel *The Low, Low Woods*, a witch who appears in the fifth issue, “The Witch’s Tale.” So it's the witch who was the mentor of the witch who was the narrator of that issue of the comic that became the graphic novel. And I was, I was very sort of conscious and aware of that, and I feel like even so was very afraid of, you know, it’s like being afraid of just fucking something up, right, something you don't know intimately. And so I'm not—yeah, I think I might maybe, but I also am just very aware that I don't know.

I mean, I have a lot of anxiety around talking about, even just the beginning of this conversation, you’ve been like, “What do you, how do you identify? What’s your relationship with gender?” I feel like I'm in this sort of transitional space where it's sort of hard for me to pin down anything really clearly. And I don't know, and it makes me feel a little stressed out, because it's not like…. In a lot of ways, you know, trans authors have really given me so much, especially, I mean, so much to chew on in terms of genderqueerness and about transness, and I want to honor that and do right by that, and I just don't know if I'm in the place to do that yet. I don't know.

And I don't know if, I mean I had, I had a lot of…. There was a lot of stress that I had around this short story that I really loved called “I Sexually Identify as an Attack Helicopter” by this writer Isabelle Fall. I remember finding this story just completely earth-shattering, like being just completely undone by how vibrant and exciting and provocative I found the story and the way that it spoke to me as a person who, for whom gender, I had this very sort of strange sort of fluid relationship with my own gender, and it was really, it was so smart, and so good. And there was a lot of sort of argument about the story and about whether or not the story was transphobic or not transphobic, and I mean there was a lot of hurt feelings, and it was a very intense conversation.

And also there was a lot of demanding of like, “Well if you’re cis, then you can't speak about it.” And I was like, “No, well, I don’t know what I am, but also that feels really shitty.” And like, it was weird how it was like both, it resonated me on this level of having a complicated relationship with my own gender, but then I was being told that I wasn't allowed to have feelings about it because of my…. It was just like a very weird and stressful moment that I think about a lot. I feel like in many ways it did this weird amount of damage, where I was like, “Man, I don't know.” So maybe I will want—I guess this is all a very long and complicated answer, but, you know, maybe one day maybe I’ll find the right story, or I’ll find the right space, or I’ll feel like I've come to my own sense of internal clarity about gender in a way that will feel like… that I’ll feel like I'll be able to really write about it in a way that feels true to me. I guess I don't even know if that’s really an answer. That’s very long! [Laughs]

**Tuck:** Yeah. I mean, I think something that is common in trans writing that is facing cis people, like trans writing for cis audiences, is that we are required to posture as if we are very, very confident about gender, because otherwise we will not be allowed access to medical or legal or social transition.

**Carmen:** Sure.

**Tuck:** But if one reads trans writing for trans people, there is increasingly space to be like, “I dunno!” You know, we're all making this up, because gender is like a cultural group project, and group projects suck. And so….

**Carmen:** [Laughs] I also hate group projects!

**Tuck:** And so, I think that regardless of whether you’re like, “I know everything there is to know about my gender”—which I don’t, personally, for me—or not, there is space to explore that. And in fact, I know for a fact that something that people have appreciated about this podcast that I make is that they watched me transition. They’ve watched me over the last three years and been like, “Oh, this person doesn’t know what they’re doing either, but he’s having an okay time.” [Both laugh] You know? Like, it’s all right. And so, I think I just want to encourage, in general, not just you, that there can be space for people to talk about gender without having definitive answers. And my hope is also that we have generous readers that are not like, the people losing their minds about the “Attack Helicopter” piece, but that we can have a more generous audience to allow people of whatever gender, to have that space to be like, “I don’t actually have all the answers, and I'm trying something and we’re gonna see how it goes,” without it needing to be the definitive piece of trans work. And so hopefully having all of these new trans books coming out gives more people, not just trans people, the space to write about gender without having to be the voice of the generation about gender.

**Carmen:** Yeah! [Laughs] That does take a lot of the pressure off, doesn’t it, when you’re like, “I don’t have to be the best, I just have to do it in good faith.” Yeah, I mean it’s, it’s such a, like, I don’t know. I mean, I feel like in many ways I mean, even though my memoir is not about transness particularly, I mean, I felt like when I was writing it like I also had this internal pressure of like, “What if I fuck it up? I’m writing this book about a thing that isn’t talked about a lot, it’s going to be a thing, and then people are gonna ask me questions and like, I don’t know. I don’t know anything, you know, I just have this book that I’ve written that I’ve worked on really hard, and in some ways I'm worried that I'll, you know, mess it up, and then what happens?” But I do feel like that is also just a pressure on marginalized communities in general, right, which is like, you know, you’re getting asked to speak for everybody. And it’s like, that’s just not how it works. But yeah, I guess I just need to wallow in the mystery a little more, I don’t know. Maybe we’ll see, maybe in a couple years, maybe something will emerge.

**Tuck:** Yeah, I mean no presh at all! [Carmen laughs] I just was thinking about it because your work is so focused on the horror of having a body, particularly a gendered body, and I was like, “Oh, this is exactly what being trans is, being trans is the horror of having a gendered body.” So.

**Carmen:** Yeah, yeah.

**Tuck:** But speaking of this, I think you said in an interview once that vampires are clearly modeled after queer women, and it's wild that we even have male vampires. Can you talk about that? Because I love that.

**Carmen:** That interview was really fun because it was, I got to do it with this friend of mine, and it was sort of this, like, weird, surreal, sort of metafictional, partially fictional interview, and I was almost in a persona, or a voice. But I do agree, I do agree with my persona that yeah, I was thinking a lot about you know, because I mean…. So the idea is that *Carmilla*, right, is this vampire novel. It’s a very gay vampire novel that predates *Dracula* by 20 years or something, and it just seems funny to me that, you know, we, when we think of the horror vampire we think of, you know, Dracula, even though this book came before it.

And I just think it’s funny, because I used to think about, you know, what is queerer than moon cycles and blood and all, you know, these are all these various sort of queer, you know, sort of like capital F, like goddess-feminine sort of things. And it’s funny to me that we’ve thought of vampires as like these sort of brooding men, when it just feels like, they just feel really queer sort of inherently. And so yeah, it was funny to me that, I don't know, that Dracula became the, sort of the archetypal vampire when in fact—I mean, he does brood, you know, he does do that. But Carmilla is just giving ladies orgasms left and right and is just, I mean, it’s just phenomenal.

**Tuck:** Yeah. I forgot, until you were answering my question, that my friend—who may or may not kill me for talking about this—my friend texted me the other day and was like, “If you were dating a vampire and you were on your period, do you think that they could just suck out all of the blood at once, so that you wouldn’t have to have a period? And if so, could they stop and not suck out all of the rest of your blood in the body but just that part?” And it was like this whole conversation, and they were like, “This would be one of the benefits of dating a vampire.”

**Carmen:** I do. Because yeah, because if they were taking out the blood in your uterus, that would be a different situation.

**Tuck:** Right. It’s self-contained, right?

**Carmen:** Right, exactly. Exactly, yes. So, I believe that that would be a benefit. And then you could ask them to do that every month, and it’d be a nice activity you could do, and then you wouldn't have to worry about it anymore, and you wouldn't have to worry about getting totally drained.

**Tuck:** Perfect. All right, so we’ve solved everything for everyone. [Both laugh]

**Carmen:** We’ve solved that problem. Yes! [Both laugh]

**Tuck:** Well, we have one question that we always ask at the end, but before that, I have been asking people for this series as a professional gender person, is there anything that you want to ask me about gender?

**Carmen:** [Laughs] Hmm, is there anything I want to ask you about gender…? Gender: yes or no?

**Tuck:** I’m gonna take a hard pass, personally. [Carmen laughs] Yeah, hm. No.

**Carmen:** Okay. [Laughs]

**Tuck:** No thank you.

**Carmen:** Great. Excellent, great. Yeah, great answer. [Laughs]

**Tuck:** Yes, thank you so much for asking, I really appreciate you. Well, actually, that does kind of tie into our last question. So, the way we always end the show is by asking, in your ideal world, what would the future of gender look like?

**Carmen:** Oh, wow. Well, for me, I think it would be that you had something on your body, I guess something you could wear, or maybe a tattoo or something you could just like see, that could reflect, accurately reflect your sort of gender, whatever that is, via colors, and you could just sort of check in with yourself and be like, “Oh, I’m feeling kind of like, blah today, you know, I’m feeling kind of like, greenish yellow. Hmm, excellent, that’s useful,” and then sort of just know. Yeah, cause I feel like for me, it’s not even—I mean, obviously I also feel like the flexibility comes from the other side, being like, “This is how I identify today.” But I sort of love the idea of my body telling me what it wants, in some moment, and getting to respond to that. And not having to think about it, just knowing. I feel like that would be really lovely, and I sort of love the idea of, I don't know, that being reflected to me in some way. But I guess that’s just my personal fantasy. That’s not like it would work for everybody. [Tuck laughs] Why are you laughing?

**Tuck:** That just—it just sounds like someone who doesn’t know what their gender is and just wants someone to tell them!

**Carmen:** Yeah, that’s what it is! [Laughs]

**Tuck:** “Um, excuse me, what if I didn’t have to figure this out and someone else just told me for me?” Which is like such a relatable thing! [Laughs]

**Carmen:** I feel like this is my problem in a nutshell, which is, I don’t want to have to deal with it. I just want someone else to tell me. But like, as a color system that is built into my body in some way.

**Tuck:** I love that, though. I mean, I have asked, you know, 100 people this question and no one has ever given that answer, and so I really appreciate you developing something fun and new, and in its way, just sort of the horror of having a gendered body! [Laughs]

**Carmen:** Right! [Laughs]

**Tuck:** So we really tie it all together.

[*Gender Reveal* theme music starts]

**Tuck:** That's gonna do it for this week's show. If you had a good time or learned something, please share this episode with folks in your community. And if you’re new here, please subscribe and listen to some of our episodes with trans people. You can find Carmen [@CarmenMMachado](https://www.instagram.com/carmenmmachado) and at [CarmenMariaMachado.com](https://carmenmariamachado.com/). If you haven’t read her books already, you are making a mistake, so get on that. We are [@Gendereveal](https://twitter.com/gendereveal) and at [GenderPodcast.com](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cjelg9%5CDesktop%5Cgenderpodcast.com), where you can find transcripts, FAQs, starter packs for new listeners, all sorts of other great resources. Our August merch is available for just a few weeks at [Bit.ly/GenderMerch](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cjelg9%5CDesktop%5Cbit.ly%5Cgendermerch). There’s some great stuff in there this month, so go take a peek. And you can support the work that we do on the show and sign yourself up for fun rewards and gossip at [Patreon.com/Gender](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cjelg9%5CDesktop%5Cpatreon.com%5Cgender).

Today’s show was produced and edited by me, Tuck Woodstock, and by our associate producer Julia Llinas Goodman. Special thanks this week to Tehya and Vanessa and everyone else who submitted questions for Carmen, and to Miranda for the most important question in this whole interview. Our logo is by Ira M. Leigh. Our theme song is by Breakmaster Cylinder. We’ll be back next week with more feelings about gender.

[*Gender Reveal* theme music ends]

**Tuck:** I love that you were able to have another partner move in with you because I was really convinced that COVID was partially sponsored by monogamy to sell more monogamy, you know, like, Big Monogamy doing a ploy. So I’m really happy that you were able to circumvent that.

**Carmen:** My sweeties tease me because I like the—I don't know if you play *Resident Evil*, or if you’ve seen this meme about the big tall vampire lady. Are you familiar? Do you know…?

**Tuck:** Really, really vaguely. [Laughs]

**Carmen:** Okay, okay! So this new *Resident Evil* game has just come out, and there’s this character that’s like a nine-foot-tall, super femme-y, kind of dom vampire lady. And the joke has become in the house that I’m the big tall vampire lady! [Laughs]