[theme music]

**Molly:** Welcome to Gender Reveal, a podcast where we ask intrusive personal questions and try to get a little bit closer to figuring out what the hell gender is. I'm your host and resident Gender Detective, Molly Woodstock.

[theme music ends]

**Molly:** I'm so excited to bring you my conversation with Eden, a.k.a. Eden the Cat, a.k.a. Ron, a.k.a. Also, Also, Also, but before I do that, I have so much else to tell you this week!

First of all, thank you so much for listening! Thank you for telling your friends and colleagues, thank you for leaving us iTunes reviews, thank you for following us on Twitter and donating on Patreon to help us cover our costs. The response so far has been absolutely incredible, and I cannot tell you how much it means to me that so many of you are listening to the show, recommending it to other folks, and just really having a good time with it.

Special thanks this week to my two favorite queer, feminist, vegan podcasts. Feminist Killjoys, PhD is an hour of feminism, pop culture, and politics as discussed by two professional killjoys. Raechel and Melody are so smart, they're so kind and thoughtful, and they were generous enough to feature our interview with Nicholas on their podcast feed! So definitely go check out their show; you'll learn so much about so many things, including just, like, how to be a better person in the world.

I was also on the very last episode of Flex Your Heart Radio, which is a podcast about body positivity, feminism, recovery, risk, and crushing it at life. The host, Lacy Davis, is one of my very best friends in the world, and on the show, she asked me about gender identity and mental health and all of this stuff that I usually ask other people about on this show. I definitely recommend binge-listening to the old Flex Your Heart Radio episodes, and I also super recommend picking up her autobiographical graphic novel, Ink in Water.

Well, I have more people to thank, but before I do that, I'm gonna take you to a segment we call "This Week in Gender":

[trumpeting news music]

**Molly:** This Week in Gender, the Department of Health and Human Services in the United States of America, in 2018 A.D., has created the division of conscience and religious freedom, which will protect doctors and other healthcare workers from having to treat certain people because of religious or moral objections. To repeat: it will protect health care providers from having to treat people because of moral or religious objections. What does that mean? It means that healthcare workers can refuse to perform abortions or provide birth control. It means they can refuse to perform top surgery, for example, or prescribe hormone replacement therapy. But really, it goes beyond that, allowing providers to deny health care in general to anyone who's not straight and cisgender. I guess this is intended to help folks who inexplicably became healthcare professionals despite being completely unwilling to help the health of queer and trans individuals, but it's terrifying for gay, bisexual, transgender, non-binary, genderqueer folks who now not only have to worry about accessing health insurance but worry about having doctors who are unwilling to treat them at all. It's fucking bad. This has been "This Week in Gender."

[trumpeting news music]

**Molly:** Before we get to our interview, I need to thank all the folks who make our show possible. First up, thanks so much to everyone who has left us a review, everyone who's recommended us to a friend, and everyone who's donated a dollar or more on Patreon. We're about a quarter of the way to our goal. If you're able and willing to help us cover our costs, visit patreon.com/gender.

Secondly, thank you to TomboyX. TomboyX makes underwear in sizes extra small to 4X. It comes in bikini, in briefs, in boxer briefs, in boyshorts, it comes in fun prints, it comes in solid colors, it comes in stripes. It can be really hard for queer and non-binary people to buy underwear that fits their gender expression, but I promise that you'll find something you love at TomboyX. And now, you can take 15% off your purchase at tomboyx.com with the offer code 'TOMBOYS'. Again, that's 15% off with offer code 'TOMBOYS'.

Lastly, thank you to our friends at GladRags. Look, if you've never used a cloth pad or menstrual cup, it might sound gross, I get it. But I cannot overstate how much GladRags pads and menstrual cups radically improved my experience as a menstruating person. They're so convenient and portable, they're so comfortable, they're so cute, they are so much more environmentally friendly, they're friendlier on your body, and in the long run, they save so much money. Of course, you can save money in the short term by using offer code 'GENDER' at gladrags.com for $5 off your purchase. That's $5 off at gladrags.com with offer code 'GENDER'.

[theme music]

**Molly:** Eden Rohatensky is also known as Ron, Eden the Cat, and Also, Also, Also. They're a programmer, musician, and writer based in Montreal. Their work centers primarily on relationships, exploring how we empathize with one another, and pop culture. You can find their work under @edenthecat on Medium and YouTube and support them on Patreon.

[theme music ends]

**Molly:** Well, first of all, thank you so much for coming on the show! I really appreciate you coming over here and talking with me. I'm really excited to meet you.

**Eden:** Thanks for having me!

**Molly:** The way that we start the show, every time, is asking, in terms of gender, how you identify?

**Eden:** I identify as non-binary. I use they/them pronouns. I kind of, I'm pretty fluid, so I'm, like, not really femme or masc, I just kind of go back and forth [laughs].

**Molly:** Yeah. Which I think is cool because I think that there are sort of out-dated tropes of you either need to be, like, femme all the time, or masc all the time, or androgynous all the time, and like, really have like a clear label, and it's nice to be able to move through those spaces even though I think it causes confusion in folks sometimes.

**Eden:** Yeah, and like, for me, it's like when I came out people were asking like, "Why didn't you cut off your hair? Why do you still wear dresses?" And it's like, well, what is androgyny? Like, if I'm identifying as neither masc or femme, then basically people expect me to dress more masc, and it's like, well, ugghhh [laughs].

**Molly:** Yeah, well, I was gonna ask you about that, about those questions because you do mention that, like, you like to wear makeup, for example, and your hair's longer, and so what kind of responses do you have to those folks who are confused?

**Eden:** Well, the thing is, is like I'm a performance artist. I am a musician, and so, part of that is, is makeup for the particular act that I'm doing. Also, Also, Also is very much, like, a caricature of a lot of the things that are projected on me as a femme-bodied person that has sex with cis dudes sometimes. So, it requires that and it also is just how I'm comfortable, and like, some days, I don't wear makeup, I'm not wearing makeup today, I'm wearing a suit. It's about my comfort, it's not really about anybody else's comfort. [Laughs] And that's basically the best response I can give, is like, there's nothing wrong with femininity. There's nothing wrong with masculinity as a concept--

**Molly:** [Laughs].

**Eden:** --there's obviously, like, in both of those things there's, like, problematic things that have grown out of that, but like, I don't wanna reject femininity completely.

**Molly:** Totally.

**Eden:** I do wanna reject gender [laughs], in regard to myself, to some extent.

**Molly:** Yeah, and there's a huge difference between performing femininity, like on your own terms and in your own way, and performing femininity, like, specifically like, because of societal pressures, or like, the male gaze, or something like that, so.

**Eden:** Yeah, exactly. And like, I'm very well aware that I take advantage of the male gaze to make money [laughs]. And that's part of it, is like, I know that as part of my performance, you know, dressing the way that I dress and performing in the way that I perform is, like, it's gender capitalism, it's, which it--and it kinda sucks that I have to do that, but it's also fun to explore and, like, understanding myself in the context of how others perceive me, and then choosing what I reject and choosing what I, you know, take advantage of, whether it's kinda shady to some people or not, is my choice.

**Molly:** Totally. Can you talk more about gender capitalism? Because I'm not sure that folks will have heard that term before.

**Eden:** So, gender capitalism is basically taking advantage of the societal norms and the expectations so that you can make a living. So, for me, I might, and like, not saying that I don't enjoy this and other aspects, is like, I realize that the fact that I pose in lingerie, sometimes, is probably going to make me money off of men that are attracted to that, and, and women, too, but, and everyone else. And so, choosing to present in a certain way that's going to bring me income is what gender capitalism is, but it's also, like, for some people that are capable of dressing androgynously in a way that they can kind of go back and forth and perform masculinity and perform femininity, and taking advantage of either end of that spectrum in a way that's going to help them bring in income of some sort, or bring in opportunities, that's what gender capitalism kind of is, to me.

**Molly:** Great, thank you for explaining that. While I have you defining terms, you've said 'femme-bodied' a few times, and I've actually never heard that, so what do you mean by that?

**Eden:** It's a shaky term, I try not to use it--I slip up sometimes--because what a femme body is is different to everyone, and, like, it's exclusionary toward trans women because of what different people's expectations are, so that was my slip. But yeah.

**Molly:** Alright, cool.

I've seen you on the Internet go by 'Eden' and 'Ron' sort of interchangeably, so--

**Eden:** [Laughs].

**Molly:** --is there one you prefer? Are those like alternate personas or are they just different names for the same person?

**Eden:** Different names for the same person. Basically, I was on OkCupid while inebriated a year ago, and some person messaged me, and all they said was "Hi, I'm Ron," and because I was inebriated, I just responded with "Hi, I'm Ron,"--

**Molly:** [Laughs].

**Eden:** --and then I found that very entertaining, and so I just, one of my friends was bugging me and was like "Eden, what are you doing?" because I was being silly, and I was like "I'm Ron," and then ever since then, it's been my nickname. So, I kinda just use them interchangeably. It, like, it worked out that it was, like, two months after I came out, so everybody kinda thought that it was part of my transition, and it kind of is. I go by both, I will respond to both, but I'm not changing my name because I really like Eden, too.

**Molly:** Gotcha, gotcha. So, you came out as non-binary like a year, year and a half ago, now--

**Eden:** Yeah.

**Molly:** --so what's changed for you in that time?

**Eden:** Dating has changed.

**Molly:** How has it changed?

**Eden:** Well, I live in Montreal, where lots of people speak French, which is a highly gendered language--

**Molly:** Oh gosh, yeah.

**Eden:** --so basically, I have to explain to a lot of people who have never had the language, like, part of the thing of where you're seeing more and more people come out as non-binary in English-speaking communities is that they have the language for it. They might have felt that way for a long time, but they never knew how to, how to talk about it. So, now that we are starting to have the language, people are being more open about the fact that, you know, 'they/them' is a singular pronoun as well, non-binary is a term, genderqueer is a term, gender is a spectrum. Those things don't necessarily exist in other languages, and therefore, people's minds haven't wrapped around them because your language really does affect the way that you think, right? So, if I'm on Tinder or something, and they see the little thing that says that I'm non-binary like I've had people ask me, like, "Is non-binary your band?"

**Molly:** [Laughs].

**Eden:** And so I have to go in like every single time, like if I'm dating a francophone person and explain that to them, and sometimes, that's met with, like, warm, open minds, or sometimes, it is met with a lot of confusion and anger [chuckles]. So that's changed. And it's intimidating for some people because I think for some people, seeing somebody that's like very comfortable in communicating how they identify, who they are, and feels pretty secure in that, it's uncomfortable for some people that might not have explored that part of themselves, and so that kind of gets weird with dating. Especially like, I have hard rules, like do not call me a girl in bed [chuckles], and like, sleeping with people that do that by accident--

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Eden:** --and like, usually, it's like, fine. And in normal conversation, I'm fine if people slip up, like I understand it, it doesn't really bother me unless they're doing it maliciously, but, you know, when you get really intimate with someone, you kinda have a different expectation, so that's, that's changed, and it's been a different thing to explore. But, overall, I would say that, like, coming out and being able to communicate my identity and, like, kind of have this, like--these terms and this method of communication has made me a lot more confident because I'm not constantly, like, doing things that I can't explain or, like, not talking about a lot of the parts of myself, and as an artist, that kind of focuses on themselves a lot because I'm a narcissist [laughs].

**Molly:** [Laughs].

**Eden:** It--it's really important, and like, that--having that method of communication has made me, like a lot more confident, both as an artist and as just a human being [chuckles].

**Molly:** Totally. What were you doing before that you couldn't explain?

**Eden:** Well, like, if you go through the backlog of my, like, discography, my friends actually made fun of me that were aware of, like, gender politics and stuff, they were like "Yeah, we kinda guessed based on lyrics and stuff." Because there was like--I would choose to allude to it, like I, Orphan Mothers, my one band, there's a line in, like, our one single that did really well, the opening line is like "I could be your heart, I could be your man, your woman." And it goes back and forth between gender things, and that it appears a lot in my songwriting, and now I can just be like, yo, I can write about being neither. I can write about just being a person, and like, when you write a lot of things that are personal and about your relationship with others, gender does come into play. Like if you're writing a love song--like, there's very few gender neutral love songs [chuckles]. And so, being able to approach that with that kind of, like, self-context, is like really dope [laughs].

**Molly:** Yeah. That's amazing, I'm glad you can do that.

Just a little tangent, I know that in Spanish, which is also a very gendered language, they're, like starting to develop workarounds, because Spanish, everything is like ends in either an 'o' or an 'a', but for gender non-binary folks, they can use an 'e', do you know if there's anything in French?

**Eden:** Yeah, so, there's, there's a couple things. So, like, people have kinda worked out pronouns, so like '*il*' and '*elle*' are 'he' and 'she', and now there's '*iel*', which I believe is spelled i-e-l, and there's a couple alternatives, but there hasn't been anything that's to my knowledge, been picked up a lot, 'cause in like, with like textbook texts, they're now defaulting, 'cause they always defaulted to masculine, it was always "*il, il, il, il, il*," now the, like, progressive thing to do is to default to '*elle*', so--but, you haven't seen, like, within like, academic circles or within a lot of, like, intellectual circles, seeing '*iel*' being picked up. The thing with French is they have '*L'académie*', which kinda dictates what proper grammar is, in French, and they haven't recognized that yet, so it's like, very early on.

**Molly:** Yeah, yeah. I was assuming it would be sort of like an underground thing, the way that it is in Spanish. And even English to an extent, you know, like, just now are folks accepting even just like, singular 'they' pronouns, like there are still a lot of media stylebooks that prohibit that.

**Eden:** Yeah, I was like, in the news--

**Molly:** Yeah!

**Eden:** --a lot last month, and it was really weird to see because I have, like, a clunky last name, I like my last name, but my last name is Rohatensky, and the, a lot of the style guides will be like "instead of using 'they', use their last name," so it was like "Rohatensky did this, Rohatensky, Rohatensky, Rohatensky, Rohatensky." I'm like, just, just say my first name at least [chuckles].

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Eden:** Like it's, it's--yeah. And, like, there were arguments on Wikipedia 'cause what happened ended up on Wikipedia, and there was like--there's like a whole debate about whether they should use 'they/them', and it's like, it's time to update the style guides, I think. [Laughs].

**Molly:** Absolutely. Yeah, that is something that I think is interesting to watch because I am a journalist, and it's interesting to see which outlets just use singular they/them without really drawing attention to it, which outlets use singular they/them, but like have to put an explanatory note that's like "they use singular they/them pronouns, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah," and which ones just use the last name over and over again. Or misgender people, that's the fourth option--

**Eden:** Yeah.

**Molly:** --that I don't prefer, but anyway, it's just interesting to see where everyone's at 'cause everyone's in different places.

**Eden:** Yeah, it was, um, it was really interesting because, like, there was times where I would do an interview with a journalist, and then their editor would take out the they/them pronouns and put she/her,

**Molly:** Ugh.

**Eden:** --and then the journalist would be embarrassed and apologetic, and I felt really bad for them because, like, it wasn't their fault, but I appreciated them taking ownership of it. Or there was, like, a lot that would just ignore me when I, like, sent them a note, and then I got so frustrated because there was like a lot of, a lot of stories at that time, where then it just became like, I would get DMs where, like, four of my journalist friends would be like "Hey. I reached out to this story," before I even, like, saw the story, "and I told them to correct your pronouns," and I was like, thank you. [chuckles] because it got really exhausting--

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Eden:** --like having to email, like, CNN and tell them, [laughing] "Hey, I'm not a girl"

**Molly:** Totally!

**Eden:** --is like, a really awkward experience [laughs].

**Molly:** Yeah, absolutely.

**Eden:** Especially when it's, like, older journalists that maybe aren't aware and stuff, and then, yeah [laughs].

**Molly:** Yeah, I mean this show isn't primarily intended to tell cis people how to be better, but that is one major thing that I can recommend, is like, if you have a friend who uses they/them pronouns, and you see them being misgendered, please speak up so they don't have to do all of the labor all of the time. And honestly, like, I'm glad your friends reached out and told you, but, like, you don't even have to tell me. Like, just, just do it [laughs].

**Eden:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Because there's been a lot of instances where I saw someone post about me, and then an hour later, the pronouns are corrected, and I don't know who reached out to them, but someone did just because they're nice, and I just appreciate it so much.

**Eden:** Yeah. It's--it's--it was--it was nice for them to reach out to me in that context because I think the friends that did it knew that I was, like, actively writing every single time--

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Eden:** --and so then they were basically letting me know that I didn't have to do that labor--

**Molly:** Right.

**Eden:** --preemptively if the pronouns hadn't been corrected yet--

**Molly:** Right.

**Eden:** --so, it's like, it's a touch-and-go situation, it's like, whatever is going to make that person do the least labor because--

**Molly:** Totally.

**Eden:** --the other thing is like if you have a non-binary friend who uses they/them pronouns, or whatever friend that uses they/them pronouns, is like, they're probably putting a lot of labor into educating their friends--

**Molly:** Mm-hmm!

**Eden:** --because, for a lot of us, we're the only friend or we're one of a few friends that people can talk to, and so we're usually, especially, I think it's a responsibility for like, white, privileged, non-binary people to put in that labor, so that, you know, people of color that identify that way don't have to because they're already doing a lot. And so, like, basically it's like, if you have a certain level of privilege and energy, it is so nice for you to donate a little bit of that [laughs]--

**Molly:** Absolutely.

**Eden:** --to your friends that don't.

**Molly:** And especially, like, it's fucked up, but like, in the same way that men find other men more credible than other genders, like, cis people find other cis people more credible, often, than trans and non-binary folks.

Anyway, do you want to talk about why you were in the news, or would you rather not think about it?

**Eden:** Sure. So, basically, I write a personal essay every other week, it's supported by Patreon, and I have deadlines; I ran out of ideas real quick--

**Molly:** [Laughs].

**Eden:** --and basically, I was having a really stressful week, and all of the Harvey Weinstein stuff was happening in the news, so I decided to write about all of the times that I have been assaulted or harassed at work, and why I wasn't surprised to hear all these things, and one of those people was a very powerful person and got let go and because he was a powerful person, everybody was writing about it. It was one of the first media people, like, within that sector that was accused, let go of, and made the news. And so, then I was like, dealing with lawyers, and it was like, this ongoing thing for an entire month after that happened. I'm really happy with how my past employer dealt with it, but it was, like, it was--there was like, five new stories a day, every day, I'm still getting Google alerts constantly as it progresses, and so, it was like, it was an interesting time because, like, as a non-binary person doing this, and at the time the--er, well still--like the conversation around it is about women speaking up, and women coming together, and women having solidarity, and there wasn't, there isn't recognition that it's not just women, and yes, I am a person that appears to be a woman to most people, so the misgendering stuff was, like, rampant [laughs].

**Molly:** Yeah, it, I mean, it sounds so awful. I'm so sorry that ha--I mean, first of all, I'm so sorry that you were assaulted by this person and others, but also it seems so re-traumatizing to not only have to, like, relive being assaulted over and over again but also, like, being constantly misgendered, and I assume there were folks that, as always, were like trolling and saying that it wasn't true or whatever, as well. So it seems like there's just all sorts of shit that would come up with that.

**Eden:** Yeah. There was, there wasn't very many people saying that it wasn't true, but there was a lot of people questioning why that person would want to assault me if I'm a blue-haired 'it' [laughs]--

**Molly:** Oh my god.

**Eden:** --that wears weird makeup. Like they would post, like, all my stage makeup photos--

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Eden:** --and be like "Would you sexually harass this person? Do they look like they need to be sexually harassed?" Actually, they would say "Does she look like she needs to be sexually harassed?" Like there was think pieces on--

**Molly:** [Laughs].

**Eden:** --my appearance and whether--

**Molly:** Sorry, I shouldn't laugh--

**Eden:** No, it's so ridiculous.

**Molly:** --but that's so fucking wild.

**Eden:** Like, I read every single thing, and most of them I did laugh at because they were so ridiculous because the company that I worked for was, like, kind of a left-targeted media organization--

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Eden:** --and so, a lot of alt-right people were like, kind of behind me because they were like "Yeah! Take down liberal media!"

**Molly:** [Laughs].

**Eden:** And I'm, like, no don't. It got, like, cartoonishly ridiculous--

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Eden:** --and so, it was, like, every forum post about what happened was like "Oh, the person that accused them, er, this dude, is an 'it'." The--I was--I got emails from, like, especially like, there was like, four or five older women that emailed me, like, with advice, they were like "I've worked in the tech industry for 30 years, and here is my advice: Stop dressing so provocatively--

**Molly:** [Laughs].

**Eden:** --stop, stop posting pictures of yourself in lingerie on your Instagram, you should dye your hair a normal color, your septum piercing makes people think that you're a weird, wild one."

**Molly:** [Laughs].

**Eden:** I'm like, at the time this happened, I had long, brown hair, I didn't wear any makeup, really, I dressed in button-up shirts and jeans every day, I didn't look like I do now, I look like I do now, probably in part as a response to all this stuff--

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Eden:** --[laughs] and also 'cause it, I look hot like this, so--

**Molly:** Oh my gosh.

**Eden:** --get outta here.

**Molly:** I mean, you super do--

**Eden:** [Laughs].

**Molly:** --but I also, like, think about that all the time. Like, my pinned Tweet on Twitter right now is like "My 2018 aesthetic is anything that repels and confuses the male gaze"--

**Eden:** [Gasps] Oh, that's so good.

**Molly:** --and it's just like, that thing, it's just like, my goal, above everything else, is to make sure that men know that I am not for them.

**Eden:** [Laughs].

**Molly:** [Laughs] like in whatever way I need to do that.

**Eden:** I mean, yeah, it's like, it's, I'm not dressing for anyone except for me and my art--

**Molly:** Exactly.

**Eden:** --[chuckles] and like, that's it, so.

**Molly:** Yeah, totally.

So, you're a programmer, and I mean, this isn't a new question, but obviously, like, being the only femme-presenting and non-binary person, or, like, woman, back when that was how you outwardly identified, seems like it would be really hard. Is there anything that surprised you about that experience? About the gender dynamics?

**Eden:** I mean, it, it, it was--I started in the tech industry so young. Like, I started, I worked at Staples Business Depot as a Tech Associate selling extended warranties--

**Molly:** [Laughs].

**Eden:** --and computers when I was, like, I think I started there when I was 15.

**Molly:** Wow.

**Eden:** So, and my dad is a programmer, and my brother is a programmer, and so, those gender dynamics, like, going to Best Buy and my dad asking my younger brother what hard drive he thought was the best when, like, I was selling them and stuff--

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Eden:** --like, that was always part of my life, so it's like, there wasn't much surprising. What did end up being, like, more of a thing was, like, me kinda coming to terms with feminism, kind of starting to self-actualize [chuckles], and then like, realizing what of these things that were happening to me consistently since I was, like, seven, weren't okay and were affecting me negatively, and like, how it was like, I was raised that, like, okay well, I'm into tech, I'm into video games, I'm into music. Everybody that's in a band that I knew, most of them were men. Everybody that was in all the tech-related classes in high school, they were all boys. I was used to being considered "one of the guys"--

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Eden:** --and how negatively that actually impacted me. I was like, well, no, I am a different person, I'm not just here to make you comfortable in your dumb bro-y-ness just because that's what you want me to do, and like, the moment that I started calling out that behavior, like when I was working at a startup when I was like 20, and men found out that I was pansexual, and that I slept with people that weren't cis dudes, and then they would ask me all these questions and I'm like, initially I was like, yeah, sure, I'll talk about it, and then I was like, wait a second, why are you asking me about who I'm sleeping with at work--

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Eden:** --during Friday beers in front of the CEO, and why is he okay with this? And why am I being pulled into a room and saying that I'm a gossip and that I'm like, what was the--I was me-centric. And it was like, the reason that he called me me-centric was that I said that that wasn't okay. And that I brought up that, like, my other co-worker talking about my arm hair wasn't okay, and then, it kind of--that kind of started brewing some anger, and like, not resentment, but just like, being like, oh, I've got work to do if I'm going to continue to do this, and I want to do the work, and like, even exploring like, I used to host girl gang dinners in my hometown Regina, or I hosted various, like, bring more women in tech events, and then realizing that the only people that showed up to that were women, or otherwise just not cis dudes, and like, realizing that we weren't educating anybody. Nobody, like, men in the workplace were gonna continue to be kind of awful, and, but, we would just be more aware of the problems that were going on and nothing was actually being done, so it was like, this kind of rolling stone of like, oh, this is bad, this is bad, this is bad, this is bad, this is bad, okay, I'm angry, I'm going to start yelling now [laughs].

**Molly:** Totally. Do you have advice for other women and non-binary folks entering that world?

**Eden:** I think being adamant, like especially in interview processes, right now, like, I'm job-hunting, and I've been job-hunting for a long time, this might be why, but like, I always ask, like, "Am I going to be the only non-binary person or femme-bodied person or whatever on your team?" Because the thing that happens is like if you're the only one, you become 'the girl' or 'the trans person' or 'the non-binary person' or 'the queer person'--

**Molly:** Yep.

**Eden:** --or 'the Black person', and then people start to project things on you, but if you have, like, an actually diverse group, not with just like that one little diversity token, then you start to see actual cultural shifts, you start to see, like, people being able to group together and say, "Hey, HR, maybe we should, like, have non-alcoholic drinks, or maybe talking about these certain topics at work, not that chill, or maybe we should do events that are more centered around, like, empathy and caring for each other and building relationships in a way that isn't centered around bro-y-ness." That's when it's a lot more comfortable and usually a lot more safe, and I think that's, that's both advice for, like, people hiring, as well as people looking for jobs. In the cases where you are taking a job where you're going to be that only person, I think it's important to be clear that, like, you're not gonna accept being just seen as 'the girl' or whatever but being seen as a colleague that should be respected, and when those things don't happen, it's, it sucks, and so, like, if you're the only person on that team, I would highly recommend finding, like, Slack groups or like, Facebook groups or whatever where you can vent because you're going to need to vent, and it sucks. [Laughs].

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Eden:** That sounded really cynical, but--

**Molly:** No, it, it's just realistic, I think. The non-alcoholic drinks is really interesting to me--

**Eden:** The thing is, is like, I love drinking, I'm kind of a lush, like, I, I do enjoy that, and so like, seeing all the news about like holiday parties closing down the open bars and stuff, like, I'm like, people blame alcohol for a lot of problems that would probably happen even without alcohol--

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Eden:** --like, I--the, half of the time that I've been harassed, or whatever, at work, it's been during daylight--

**Molly:** Right.

**Eden:** --at, you know, like 11:00 AM [laughs] when people have not been drinking. So it's like, I think we need to look into how do we have, like, team-building experiences that focus on building empathy and building, on building comfort and safety so that people can build relationships that aren't centered around the fact that they were inebriated and did something silly--

**Molly:** Totally.

**Eden:** --and rebellious. You know, like, there's gotta be different ways of bonding, whether that's, like, you know, everybody goes for like a weekly lunch, or whatever, or you go and you go mini-golfing and do silly things, or you just have personal talks, or whatever, once a week. Stuff like that, I think, is a lot more effective than just, like, completely exing out alcohol, but also, like, looking into, like, how do we make the people that don't wanna drink feel comfortable at these events.

**Molly:** Totally. While we're on the advice portion, the unofficial advice portion that I just created for you, you write really candidly about, like, mental illness and suicidality, and I was just wondering because the queer and trans community has these really staggeringly high rates of mental illness and suicidality, I was just wondering if you had any advice for other folks that were struggling with that?

**Eden:** For me, what worked was, like, in the past year, so I attempted suicide, the last time that I attempted suicide was three years ago, and there was a few other times that I don't talk about before that. And a lot of it was that I didn't have the tools or the capacity to communicate what I was feeling, and then I felt really, really isolated, and then I just didn't see a point. And so, I think what's helped me the most in the past year, and I'm a person that is bipolar and unmedicated, is just being extremely open and honest, and I realize that I am an extreme case of open and honest--

**Molly:** [Laughs].

**Eden:** --you know, where I write about everything personal in a very public fashion, and I make money doing that. But just like, finding, finding spaces where you can talk about things and where you can have support, and where people--where you can give care and receive care from other people--is really important, and if you can't find that easily, reaching out to people that might know where you can find that is really good, like, I get, I get and I answer DMs constantly of people looking for communities like that, and finding people to talk to is really, really important, even when you don't want to. [Chuckles].

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Eden:** I often don't wanna talk about things, and now I have, like--but I've put myself in a position where I have people that check in on me when I kinda shut down and isolate myself. Yeah. I think just finding community is really good. And being honest with yourself and others even though it's scary.

**Molly:** You wrote in a Medium post that "coming out as non-binary sort of helped you recognize your privilege more," can you talk about that?

**Eden:** Well, the thing that happened with coming out as non-binary is like, I existed in a primarily cis and a primarily white space living in Regina, Saskatchewan. There, and being in the music scene there, that was like my primary community, a lot of it is white dudes. There are queer people, there's amazing queer artists and genderqueer artists, and trans artists coming out of Saskatchewan that I really love, but it is primarily cis, white men, and so, when I came out, a lot of them were like, kind of--it was, like, tragedy porn for them. They were like, "Oh, things must be very difficult for you, I'm so sorry," but I'm like, yeah, things are difficult, like I, I'm a person that grew up in relative poverty, that like paid for their own schooling, and, and had things, but I'm also, like, a kind of, traditionally-accepted pretty person that is white, that is well-educated, that doesn't have any like major disabilities, like I have a lot of privilege [laughs]. And so, like, watching how people reacted to that because they didn't, didn't necessarily have to face the different--the difference of privilege between what it means for, like, a queer, Black person because there isn't that many Black people in Saskatchewan or like, the people that are people of color, a lot of them are recent immigrants because of the immigration laws in Saskatchewan, or they're Aboriginal people, and like, the--there's like, a disconnect within the communities there, and so, like, a lot of these people didn't have to face that and os, coming out as non-binary made me, like, have to really think about my empathy and, like, how I approach intersectionality within my feminism because, you know, like, asking people to be considerate of my pronouns also makes me, like, think about like, well, okay, I'm asking people to be considerate of my pronouns, but maybe I should also be like, really considerate about, like, what is hurting other people, and like, a lot of that is like, you know, racially-based microaggressions and stuff, and so, having to like, really be conscious of that because it's not really--it's really--it doesn't feel right to not recognize that [laughs]--

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Eden:** --at this point. Especially since I'm like, displaying what is going on with me so openly, I like, and I have a platform and I have an audience, like, I don't want to just be amplifying the voice of this one white, pretty, non-binary person [laughs].

**Molly:** Totally.

We're gonna start wrapping up, but is there anything else coming up for you around gender or queerness or anything like that that you wanna make sure to talk about?

**Eden:** Yeah! I mean, I'm definitely like, I'm still in this process, like, it's only been like a year of being out and being able to talk about things. I'm in the process of, like, still digesting what it means to me, what it means for, like, how I present, and how--and what transitioning might look like. I'm very much in a, like, questioning space--

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Eden:** --I have, like, part of, like, me coming out as non-binary is, like, I have hormonal imbalances, like if you considered me a woman, I would have a lot more testosterone than most women do, and so that was, like part of it, and, like--so I'm like, exploring. Trying to figure it out health-wise [laughs].

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Eden:** And, yeah. It's just a long, long self-reflection thing that I'm gonna be doing for the rest of my life.

**Molly:** Yeah. I mean, I think that's something that's really challenging about coming out as queer or trans or non-binary is the like, sort of, learning in public, and like, learning who you are and how to define yourself and how to express yourself and how it's sort of a fluid situation, whereas a lot of folks, when you come out, they want like one easy answer of, like, who you're gonna be from that moment on, and you're like "I don't know!" [Laughs].

**Eden:** Yeah. I don't think that the English language or any language or even like, necessarily, like, [laughs] the human consciousness--

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Eden:** --really can capture the nuance that comes into play with gender stuff--

**Molly:** Totally.

**Eden:** --because it's a societally-constructed thing that has some science to it that is very confusing for, I think, everyone. [Laughs].

**Molly:** Yeah. Sort of speaking of that, the question I like to end with is: What do you the future of gender is gonna look like? Or, in your ideal world, what would it look like?

**Eden:** I think in my ideal world, I think that gender is really an identity thing, and that it's not going to be something that we project onto other people, that we accept that just as you learn somebody's name, you also learn how they identify on the spectrum. I think that, like, the idea of, like, saying like "Gender doesn't exist. Gender is a ghost, a spooky ghost--

**Molly:** [Laughs].

**Eden:** --that is, is the hauntings of the past," is short-sighted. I think that gender really is important. But that it is something that, like, we need to--I hope we get to the point where people aren't projecting it onto people, and that they're, like, taking it as an identity. I really hope so.

**Molly:** Yeah. It's hard 'cause I totally agree with you, but also, "gender is a spooky ghost" is an amazing line [laughs], so now I kinda want that to be real--

**Eden:** [Laughs].

**Molly:** --but anyway. Well, thank you so much for coming on the show; I really talking with you.

**Eden:** Me too! Thanks for having me.

[theme music]

**Molly:** That's gonna do it for this week's show! If you have questions, ideas, thoughts, feelings you'd like to share, DM us on Twitter or email us we're at gendereveal@gmail.com, that's Gender Reveal with one 'r'. As always, we welcome your kind words, we welcome your iTunes reviews, we welcome your donations on Patreon or PayPal, and if you donate $5, we'll send you some fun stickers!

This episode was edited by me, Molly Woodstock, with help from Liza Yeager.

Our logo is by Michelle Leigh, and our theme music is by the legendary Breakmaster Cylinder.

We'll be back next week with more feelings about gender, so, uh, brace yourselves!

[theme music ends]