

Shmanners 194: Emily Post [RE-AIR EPISODE]

Published January 23rd, 2020

[Listen here on themcelroy.family](https://themcelroyfamily.com/listen-here-on-themcelroy-family)

Travis: Hello, internet! I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy, and you're listening to another wonderful, amazing, re-air episode of *Shmanners*! We are still adjusting to new baby life. We will get back to brand new episodes soon, but you are in for a treat!

If you haven't heard this one, this episode is all about Emily Post, and believe you me, as someone who did not know much about her before we recorded the episode, I found Emily Post to be fascinating.

So, I hope you enjoy it, uh, and tell all your friends about it, and we'll be back with brand new episodes soon! Uh, so please enjoy this re-air episode of *Shmanners*!

Teresa: Travis, the time has come.

Travis: What... time?

Teresa: To learn about my girl Emily Post!

Travis: It's *Shmanners*!

[theme music plays]

Travis: Hello, internet! I am your husband host, Travis McElroy.

Teresa: And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy.

Travis: And you're listening to *Shmanners*.

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette...

Travis: For ordinary occasions! Good morning, my love.

Teresa: Good morning, dear.

Travis: How are you?

Teresa: I'm well, how are you?

Travis: I'm good. It's a nice, relaxed, rainy Sunday morning here in the Ohio river valley.

Teresa: Sure is.

Travis: And you know—[softly] I'm gonna—I am gonna put on my NPR voice—

Teresa: [laughs] Please don't.

Travis: [softly, close to the mic] It's, uh... we had a lovely baby shower yesterday—

Teresa: Can you—can you take that voice off, please?

Travis: [softly, close to the mic] I wish I could, but the voice has become me, now.

Teresa: No—no you have to take it off.

Travis: [softly, close to the mic] I have become the voice.

Teresa: [strained] I don't like that...

Travis: And, uh, we're—so this is, um—we're recording way ahead of time. Like I said, it's Sunday, so maybe... I don't know, maybe there'll be big etiquette news [through laughter] over the next couple days.

Teresa: Ooh.

Travis: But don't be thrown off if it doesn't come up in the show. And, you know, to try to accommodate the shooting schedule of the *My Brother, My Brother, and Me* TV show, we're gonna give you a couple biography specials. We've done one or two before. We talked about Evander, the king of dudes.

Teresa: And we talked about Le Pétomane.

Travis: We talked about Le Pétomane in our, uh—in our Max Fun Drive special. And this time, we're talking someone who's very near and dear to the show. Um, maybe Teresa's greatest inspiration and hero in life.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, but one of our greatest resources for this show, and we reference her just about every episode: Emily Post!

Teresa: Yes!

Travis: I—I'm so—Emily Post is a figure to me that, like, I hear referenced all the time. I know that there have been—what, like, 17, 18 different versions of her guide to etiquette that have come out?

Teresa: [laughs] So many more.

Travis: Really?

Teresa: Yes. [laughs]

Travis: And, like, I—but I... [sighs] there is a part of me—and I imagine I'm not alone in this—that, until we started doing this show, assumed that she was not real. That she was like Betty Crocker or—

Teresa: Or like a Dear Abby or something?

Travis: Yeah, that it was, like, almost an amalgamation of people that just put on a name that they used to, like, publish books and give advice. She is a real person, right?

Teresa: Well, no, not anymore, because she's dead.

Travis: Well, she *was* a real person—

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: —I guess I should say. She is a real human being who lived in the world.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: What's her deal? Like—

Teresa: Well, let's start at the beginning, please.

Travis: A very good place to start.

Teresa: So, Emily Post was born in Baltimore Maryland on maybe October 3rd, or October 27th?

Travis: Wait—

Teresa: Or October 30th. Maybe in 1872, or perhaps 1873.

Travis: Okay, wait. This is not doing—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —much for my "Was she a real person?" question.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: What's the confusion?

Teresa: There are several different reports, and I think at that point it's probably hard to track down. It was just after the civil war, and—

Travis: She was born just after the civil war?!

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Man, that was a long time ago! I'm gonna show my hand on ignorance on a lot of this because, like, if you had told me she was, like, born in 1960 I would've been like, "Okay." [through laughter] Like, I don't—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —anytime BT, Before Travis, is, like, just shrouded in mystery and fog for me.

Teresa: So, yeah. I mean, it's not like her birth certificate doesn't exist, but I—I do imagine it's fairly difficult to track down.

Travis: I mean, that's probably—yeah, it makes sense.

Teresa: Um, so it's a little contested. I believe that her website says 1873, then there are other sources—

Travis: Now, I'm going to assume here—

Teresa: —that say 1872.

Travis: —I'm going to assume here that you mean the website about her, and not *her* website that she started.

Teresa: The Emily Post Institute's...

Travis: Got it.

Teresa: ... website. Um... so, she was born into privilege. She was the only child of a Baltimore architect named Bruce Price, and then his wife, um, obviously.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Unless we're dealing with, like, a Junior situation here.

Teresa: And, um... so even though she was born in Baltimore, Maryland, very shortly after she was born they all moved to New York City, where, you know, they were part of the high society scene, mingling with the Roosevelts and the Asters and JP Morgan and the Vanderbilts. So, like, she was all up in that—that really great high society life.

Travis: All that big money names that we all know about.

Teresa: Right. Um, she was educated by governesses, and then later private schools in Baltimore and New York. Um, and again, just showing that privilege there, she spent summers at Bar Harbor in Maine, and Tuxedo Park in New York, and... and, uh—

Travis: Tuxedo Park, where... tuxedos were invented.

Teresa: No.

Travis: No, that's real! No, that's real.

Teresa: What, really?!

Travis: Remember from our Evander episode where we talked about, like, the word—the jacket, and—

Teresa: Oh yeah!

Travis: —yeah, Tuxedo Park is where tuxedos get their name. Where did Tuxedo Park get its name? Nobody knows!

Teresa: Nobody knows. But, um, Bruce Price—

Travis: People might know. What I should say is *I* don't know. [laughs quietly]

Teresa: Bruce Price was actually involved in the planning and building of, uh—of Tuxedo Park.

Travis: It's all—it's all wheels within wheels, baby. It's all connected.

Teresa: It is. It's all connected somehow. Um, so she was still—she was in the life of the debutante, you know? That sort of era. Um, and at her debut season... which I believe you get three seasons as a debutante—

Travis: I don't know. We should do a whole episode about what that means.

Teresa: We should! I believe—I believe you get three seasons as a debutante, and after three seasons you're an old maid.

Travis: We should do this. We should do, like, a debutante episode, or, like, we could tie in Cotillion and quinceañera, all the cul—sweet sixteen, all, like, the coming out parties, you know? The debut parties? I would love to know about that stuff. I don't have any concept of that.

Teresa: Mark it down. We shall do it.

Travis: Done.

Teresa: Um, she met Edwin Post!

Travis: Now, that last name definitely sounds familiar. Perhaps foreshadowing? Do they end up together?

Teresa: Um... and they met at a ball, at a Fifth Avenue elegant mansion.

Travis: Yes, of course. That makes sense.

Teresa: And—

Travis: They met at a Denny's. They really hit it off... over a plate of eggs.

Teresa: —and she went on to marry him!

Travis: [gasps] Spoiler.

Teresa: Um... so they had a fashionable wedding for the time, and they toured the continent on their honeymoon, and then they settled in New York, in New York's Washington Square.

Uh, but they also had a country cottage in Tuxedo Park, which she loved to visit. Again, 'cause she was pretty well off.

The sad part is, it didn't last very long. The marriage. She—they did have two sons together, Edwin Maine Post Jr. and Bruce Price Post. Um, but the couple divorced in 1905.

Travis: Well... I want you to know that just given the time period, when you said it didn't last I figured that it was a chance it was divorce, but there was a much bigger chance... that he died.

Teresa: I mean—

Travis: It was a very tumultuous time, as far as deaths were concerned.

Teresa: I mean, he certainly did die before her. We'll get to that.

Travis: Okay! Ooh, foreshadowing!

Teresa: But, uh, apparently it was a very *scandalous* divorce.

Travis: [gasps]

Teresa: Uh, it was all over the New York papers, because he had had affairs—

Travis: [gasps]

Teresa: —with chorus girls and up-and-coming actresses—

Travis: Edwin!

Teresa: I know! And all of this—

Travis: You cad!

Teresa: —came out because he was blackmailed.

Travis: What?!

Teresa: Because of the affairs. I know!

Travis: This is, like, actually interesting!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: When you said it was scandalous I was like, "Oh, 'cause they were rich." And like, no, no, no, there was a whole thing! And she said, "There must be a better way! I will teach people to be better!" Is that what happened?

Teresa: Uh... no.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: Not at first. Um, so once her sons were old enough to attend boarding school they did that, and she began to write. Um, and she—

Travis: Now, she would've been around what age at this point, hypothetically?

Teresa: Um—well, uh... let's see.

Travis: If she was born in '72 or '73, and it's 1901?

Teresa: 1905 is when they got divorced.

Travis: 1905. So she would've been, what? 30... something? 33, some—30-something, depending on what year she was born.

Teresa: Yeah, but let's see... if the youngest son, Bruce Price, was born in 1895, how old do you have to be to go to boarding school? Five? Six?

Travis: Sure. I—[stammers] I don't know much. But—so her son would've been born when she was around 20, 20-ish.

Teresa: So, like... I mean, it looks like the younger boy would've been ten when they got divorced, so that's—I think that's just about right. Probably the same time they got divorced was when they left for boarding school.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Right. So, when they left for boarding school she began to write, and it really was... I don't wanna say out of necessity, um, but she did have to supplement her income.

Travis: Really?

Teresa: Because she didn't ask for any money in the divorce. Um, apparently—

Travis: That's interesting, considering the fact that, like, he seems to be so at fault here.

Teresa: Well, she—it was really out of compassion that she didn't ask any money, because he lost almost everything in a stock market crash at the time.

Travis: Oh yeah, that whole thing. That whole thing right there at the beginning of the 1900s. Gotcha.

Teresa: Yeah. So she used the writing to supplement her income. She came from money, so it's difficult to say exactly how much the writing was a necessity and how much it really was just as a supplement.

Travis: Yeah. But I'm sure that there was a certain amount of, like, once—I don't know that much about turn-of-the-century marriages, but I imagine there was a

lot of, like, once your child was married off, especially a daughter, to a rich man, you kinda went like, "Cool, cool. You're fine. I don't need to, like, pay—I don't need to, like, provide an allowance for you anymore."

Teresa: Well, but part of a dowry can be a sum a year.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Instead of just one lump sum.

Travis: That's true.

Teresa: It would depend on how it was all set up. Um, so she actually began writing romance stories.

Travis: Very mannerly romance stories, which everyone was very polite—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —"I would like to kiss you, please." "Yes, thank you."

Teresa: And they appeared in several popular magazines, and then later in a book. She also became a traveling war correspondent.

Travis: Really?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: That's *very* interesting.

Teresa: So, here are the names of a couple of those, uh, of novels. Her first one was *The Flight of a Moth*, published in 1904.

Travis: How poetic.

Teresa: Which is about a young American widow attracted to a crooked Russian nobleman.

Travis: [gasps] Ooh, oh, like a moth to the flame! I bet that was a whole motif.

Teresa: Um, and so she wrote novels for about 15 years, and then she decided that she wanted to do something else.

Travis: Wait. She wrote novels for, like, 15 years?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Like, a long time!

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Okay!

Teresa: Um—

Travis: See, because I was expecting you to say that, like, she wrote a couple but they never did well, and so she started writing and answering advice for manners, and that took off. But 15 years is a pretty long time to write novels!

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I mean, not as long as some people's careers, but I just mean before switching to a whole new thing.

Teresa: Um, kind of a transitionary period for her was in 1916, she published a book called *By Motor to the Golden Gate*, which is a—a recount of her road trip that she made from New York from San—made from New York to San Francisco with her son.

Travis: Now—listen. When we started talking about—and you said you were gonna do a bio of Emily Post I was like, "Okay. That'll be cool. Everyone will be very interested."

I was not expecting, like—we started exactly how I expected, from privilege, of this—and then it's like, "Scandalous divorce! And she was a war correspondent! She wrote romance novels, and she drove across the country!" Like, she had a lot more adventure in her life than I expected!

Teresa: Surely did, surely did! So—

Travis: How has no one made an Emily Post movie yet?

Teresa: Uh, I mean, there's a lovely book out. Um—

Travis: Book's aren't movies, though. I mean—

Teresa: I know...

Travis: —movies are super cool, and books are for nerds.

Teresa: A biography book, and I—

Travis: Books are not for nerds. Books are for everyone.

Teresa: —and I'll go through some of the most interesting points from that biography a little later.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Oh, wait. I need to tell you—I promised I'd tell you about how her husband died, correct?

Travis: Yes, please! Not like I'm super hungry for Edwin's death, I'm just... curious. Now you got me on the hook, just reel me in!

Teresa: I'm not exactly certain when he died, but he did drown in a sailboat accident in Fire Island Inlet in New York.

Travis: Wow.

Teresa: Oooh.

Travis: Listen, I'm not at all gonna celebrate—a man died. That's very sad. I'm just saying that it's just—the pieces keep falling into place for a very cool movie! [sighs]

Teresa: Alright. So... the etiquette book.

Travis: I would like to pitch a title for the movie I just thought of.

Teresa: Okay, what is it?

Travis: *Post Modern.*

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Just think about it.

Teresa: I will.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: I think the—what you had imagined before hand, the etiquette book—

Travis: Uh-huh?

Teresa: That happened in 1922. It was called *Etiquette:... colon... in Society, in Business, in Politics, and at Home.*

Travis: Wait. 1922?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And she was born in 1870-something?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: So she was, like, 50 when she wrote her first etiquette book?

Teresa: Yep.

Travis: [whispering] Wow. Okay.

Teresa: And it topped the nonfiction bestseller list!

Travis: That's amazing.

Teresa: [excitedly] And it is where the phrase "According to Emily Post" soon entered our language as the final word on the subject of social conduct!

Travis: Okay, listen. This is, again—you see 'em sometimes on Facebook of the, like, "His coach told him he'd never amount to anything. He was cut from three basketball teams. [inhales] It's *Michael Jordan.*"

Like, this, to me, is like... her husband cheated on her a bunch and she got divorced and had to write romance novels and she didn't write her, like, most influential thing until she was 50 years old! Like, that's so—I find this so... in an odd way, comforting and inspiring. Of, like, "Maybe at 50 *I'll* write a thing that will, like, completely change an aspect of the world forever, that will make me suddenly, like, the expert on the thing." You know what I mean? Like—

Teresa: Wouldn't that be awesome?

Travis: Yes, it would be awesome! That would be amazing!

Teresa: So the book *Etiquette* was originally written for, you know, the newly rich who wanted to kind of live and entertain and speak like the wealthy.

Travis: So it was like a guidebook more than it was, like, an advice—like, this was like a how-to of polite society.

Teresa: Certainly, yeah, yeah. Well, because she didn't really start her newspaper column until later either.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um... so it was almost like... well, it wasn't quite a how-to. It was like an example book, right? Because—

Travis: Like Goofus and Gallant?

Teresa: [laughs quietly] Yes.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: [laughs] Uh, there was a character in it called Miss Three in One, who was a wonderwoman who acted as cook, waitress, and charming hostess at small dinner parties.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Right? So she kind of showed through example—which was a big thing for Emily Post—she had this character do the things that she wanted to instill in her readers.

Travis: So it was a lot more of, like, show and not tell.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Gotcha. Make it active rather than—which was probably what helped make it so successful, is that it was a lot easier to relate to a character rather than just, like, a list of rules and, you know, spouting off... you know, words. It was instead much more demonstrable ideas.

Teresa: Mm-hmm. Um, and she actually updated that book, *meticulously* updated that book, um, twice a decade to keep it consistent with America's changing social landscape. So there have been lots of reiterations of this book, and I think up to... 89 printings.

Travis: Whoaaa. 89 different pr—that's amazing.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: We're gonna talk even more about the amazing, incredibly surprising Emily Post, but first, here's a word from some other Max Fun shows!

[theme music plays]

[*Star Trek* com noise]

Captain Picard: Nearly two decades ago, Commander Data sacrificed his life.

Speaker 1: *The Greatest Discovery* is also about *Star Trek: Picard*!

Speaker 2: Jesse Thorn won't let us stay on the network unless we do all the *Star Trek* series—

Speaker 1: [laughs]

Speaker 2: —and so, here we are. Doing a show about maybe our favorite *Star Trek* character of all time.

Speaker 1: If you're excited to watch the new *Star Trek: Picard* series and you'd like some veteran *Star Trek* podcasters to watch it along with, we're your guys! Sorry, you're stuck with us.

Seven of Nine: The hell are you doin' out here, Picard? Saving the galaxy?

Speaker 2: So subscribe *The Greatest Discovery*. You can find it anywhere you find podcasts.

Speaker 1: Or at Maximumfun.org.

Speaker 3: Jean-Luc Picard!

[*Star Trek* com noise]

Travis: Okay, we're back. So, when we just left off, she had published her book about manners and stuff, and it was, like, a bestseller and everyone was like, "That's super cool and you're super great and we love you very much."

Teresa: [laughs quietly]

Travis: And then what happened?

Teresa: Well... um, about ten years later, she started some radio programs, and that's when she started her daily columns.

Travis: So just to keep track, this is, like, as 60-something?

Teresa: Yep.

Travis: She became, like, a radio and advice phenomenon.

Teresa: Yep!

Travis: Okay!

Teresa: Uh, her column was syndicated in about 200 newspapers by 1932.

Travis: And at that point that's all there was in the world.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: That was every newspaper as far as I, Travis McElroy, am aware of.

Teresa: It seems a lot, doesn't it?

Travis: It seems like a lot! There's—okay, probably not when you think that probably every newspaper—every, like, city—major city or slightly major city probably has their own newspaper.. so maybe 200 isn't a lot, but it seems like a lot to me.

Teresa: So, at that point that was when this whole kind of like advice column and... and Emily Post as etiquette expert really solidified, because that's when she had to start, um, a separate office to receive her mail. Um, and in 1946 was when she formed the Emily Post Institute.

Travis: So, '46. So that's... like, about 73?

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Travis: She was kick—like, she was doin' great!

Teresa: Yeah! I mean, she was always, like—according to her obituary, she remained very active throughout her life—

Travis: [dismayed] She's dead?!

Teresa: Yes, I told you that earlier.

Travis: Oh, okay. I was trying to make a joke.

Teresa: She, um, always got up early, but often answered her letters and wrote her daily column in bed before getting up. And then, um, she would always come out and have a very public lunch around 1 PM—

Travis: [wheezes] I like that phrase. "A very public lunch."

"[shouts distantly] Look at this sandwich! Everybody!"

Teresa: [laughs] That's n—

Travis: "[shouts distantly] Everybody, check out my pickle! I'm having a soda!"

Teresa: [through laughter] Now, you know that's not what that means.

Travis: I know, but I wish that was out.

Teresa: She went out! She got dressed! She went out every day to lunch. Like, in with the people, not, like, in her home, is what that means.

Travis: I know. My way is funnier, though. "[shouts distantly] Take a picture of these chips!"

Teresa: [snorts and laughs quietly]

Travis: "[shouts distantly] Look at these chips, you guy—I'm havin' a cookie!"

[normal tone] I guess she was eating at Subway in my fantasy. [through laughter] That's what I'm picturing.

Teresa: That does sound like it.

Travis: "[shouts distantly] I'm havin' Sun Chips!"

Teresa: Alright. Um... so then her Institute was continued after her death in 1960 by her, I believe, granddaughter, Elizabeth Lindley Post. Um, and then by the next one in line, Peggy Grayson Post.

Travis: So she passed away when she was—1960, so that would be... what? She was, like, 90? Almost 90?

Teresa: I believe 8—late 80's. 86.

Travis: 86, depending on what year she was born.

Teresa: Yeah. Give or take.

Travis: She did great. She made it a good long time.

Teresa: Totally did. So, here are some, you know, some descriptions of Emily Post, some very interesting tidbits.

Travis: Yes, please give us the tidbits.

Teresa: She was 5'9", which is fairly tall for a woman of that age. Um, you know, the age right after the Civil War.

Travis: Of that era, not of her, like—

Teresa: Of that era.

Travis: —yeah, physical age. Gotcha.

Teresa: You're right, that is what I mean. Um, and has mostly been photographed with gray hair and blue eyes. I imagine that she probably wasn't born with gray hair, um, but as we know, she really didn't come into the whole etiquette thing until, like, her 50's.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So it's possible she had grayed by then. Um, she disliked pretentious people—

Travis: Really?

Teresa: Dirty silver, and hostesses who served themselves first.

Travis: Interesting. I liked that she—I might be romanticizing this at this point, but I have this image of her that she kind of strikes me as someone who's like, "Here's all the how-to. Here's how to do it. Now don't be pretentious about it," is a really, like... I don't know, it just seems like a good lesson to kind of follow of, like, know how to do it, but don't look down your nose at people who don't know how to do it. Like, etiquette isn't about being better than everyone else. It's being the best you you can be?

Teresa: And I think that that really does ring true, especially for Emily Post! Because, um, in 1938 she spilled a spoonful of berries at a dinner of the Gourmet Society. Um, and everyone else in the room exhibited flawless etiquette... when

they completely pretended not to notice. She spilt, like, a whole thing of berries. Uh, a spoonful, it says, but...

Travis: How big was that spoon? We'll never know! Perhaps a ladle!

Teresa: It could've been quite large. And everyone just continued eating. Nobody said a word. And, uh, the press was not quite so accommodating. Uh, they did note the faux pas the next day in—[laughs] in the papers, but Emily Post just is—is quoted as laughing it off.

Travis: Yeah, she's human. Everybody's human.

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: You know, sometimes we talk about stuff and we talk about, like, the—this is the general rule, or this is, like, the expected etiquette. And people, like, respond on Facebook and Twitter and like, "But what if this happens, or what if—what if I find myself in this situation and I can't do that thing?"

And I think, like, in general it sounds like Emily Post is of this mind of, like, everybody's human. Like, you end up... I don't wanna attribute—I don't wanna project my own thoughts and feelings on Emily Post, so I'll just say my own thoughts. Which, like, if you know how to do a thing, you know what to do in case of, you know, emergency or necessity, but that doesn't mean, like, if you don't do that you're a horrible, bad person and we don't want to... [pauses] you know, associate with you.

Teresa: We're all just doin' the best we can.

Travis: You know, I've always thought that, like—especially as we've started doing this show—that the reason you learn this stuff, the reason you learn etiquette and manners is so that if you find yourself in a situation where you don't know what to do, you have some kind of structure to fall back on. Where it's just like, "Well, I don't know what to do, so I know that I can politely ask, I can—" you know, we talked about that in the dinners episode. Of, like, who do you ask? Who do you talk to? Is it okay to check in with the host? That kind of thing.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Where it's like, yeah!

Teresa: Absolutely.

Travis: And you know that stuff to fall back on, not so that you can, like, judge other people who don't know how to do it.

Teresa: Right. Um, and here are a couple of other questions that she was asked.

"Is dunking donuts correct?"

Travis: "And do you like Dunkin' Donuts?"

Teresa: [laughs] No.

Travis: "Do you enjoy Dunkaccinos?"

Teresa: That wasn't part of it.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: And she answered:

"Any place that would have donuts would be like a picnic, where short of smearing wet donuts from ear to ear, you could pretty much do as you pleased. You wouldn't—"

Travis: [laughs loudly]

Teresa: [laughs] She says—

Travis: "Short of rubbing it all over your face—"

Teresa: [laughs] "You wouldn't have donuts at a formal dinner anyway."

So I think that that—that is a really great kind of, uh—

Travis: That's—that's so long form of, like, "Man, I don't know. Just be cool!"

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "Enjoy it—where are *you* having donuts? What are you talking about? Dunk away!"

Teresa: [through laughter] Yeah!

Travis: "This isn't prison. Do whatever you want!" I like that. "Short of smearing it ear to ear." I like that.

Teresa: Yep. [laughs]

Travis: "[old lady voice?] And that's when draws a smile on one's face."

Teresa: And this was my favorite. Elbows on the table.

Travis: Yes?

Teresa: Emily Post is actually quoted as saying:

"On the rule against elbows on the table while eating: if not using the arm as a lever, swinging a fork or spoon from plate to mouth, it really doesn't make much difference."

Travis: Boom. Boom!

Teresa: She says, "Etiquette is the science of living. It embraces everything. It is the code of sportsmanship and honor. It is ethics."

Travis: That's really good. She really knew what she was talking about!

Teresa: Yeah! I'd say! And what a turn of phrase.

Travis: That's really good.

Teresa: So here are some very interesting facts from her biography, written by... an author, uh, last name Claridge.

Her father participated in the building of the Statue of Liberty.

Travis: Whoaa! Now—now—

Teresa: And she played inside the skeleton as a girl!

Travis: That's... pretty fun. When you say "participated," he probably wasn't, like, there welding and holding up pieces of metal.

Teresa: Oh, no, no, no. That's—

Travis: He wasn't like, "Come on, boys! Let's do this!"

Teresa: As a wealthy architect, he was probably an overseer type, um—

Travis: Yeah. He was probably much more on, like, the desk side of it. Standing there with big rolls of paper going, "You guys are doin' great!"

Teresa: But she did, she played inside the structure as a girl.

Travis: On top of it. That's the amazing thing—

Teresa: No. [through laughter] Not—

Travis: —she balanced—

Teresa: [laughs] No.

Travis: —she was there, carryin' sandwiches to the workers.

Teresa: In—inside it. Inside it.

Travis: That's why—you know that picture of the people sittin' on girders? That small little girl at the end? That's Emily Post. Not—not a lot of people know that.

Teresa: Now you're just makin' stuff up.

Travis: I think that's true.

Teresa: No.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: [holding back laughter] She was a banjoist.

Travis: What, really?!

Teresa: She played the banjo! She was considered one of the best banjoists in fashionable so—fashionable society when she was young.

Travis: [whispering] *What?*

Teresa: Totes.

Travis: [whispering] *What?!*

Teresa: I know!

Travis: That's awesome!

Teresa: She's great! She was a guest at Mark Twain's 70th birthday party.

[pauses]

Travis: [whispering] How—*what?* They—

Teresa: You are aghast.

Travis: I really am! She had, like, a super cool life!

Teresa: As the Brits would say, gobsmacked.

Travis: I am—I *am*! [pauses] Zounds! Okay—

Teresa: [laughs] Uh, on that road trip I mentioned that she wrote about with her son, cross country... [laughs quietly] one of the things that she wrote about where how terrible the roads were, and how they kept getting constantly stuck in the mud.

Travis: So this was—this was not a road trip like you and I took across the country.

Teresa: No.

Travis: This was, like, early, early, early, early, early days.

Teresa: I mean, it was 1915.

Travis: [whispering] Wow.

Teresa: Yeah. Um, her son was an American pilot during World War II.

[pauses]

Yep. And he received an award for his service.

Travis: [whispering] Wowwww.

[pauses]

Teresa: The first edition of the *Etiquette* book was written out longhand, so by hand. It took her a year and a half. Um, when it was published in 1922—it was July of 1922—it cost four dollars.

Travis: Really?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Um, anybody who's interested in buying the... Emily Post guide now—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —the most current edition—uh, think more, like, textbook prices than four dollars. It's *very* worth it, though. It's a huge volume. I mean, like, we own a copy of it. It's *huge*.

Teresa: It is. It is very large. Um, and there are statistics saying that that book *Etiquette*, is the second most stolen book from public libraries. What do you think the first one is?

Travis: [hesitantly] The Bible?

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Really?!

Teresa: Totally.

Travis: Don't steal the Bible!

Teresa: I guess people really need it. They need it.

Travis: Don't steal the Bible!

Teresa: Don't steal books at all? From libraries?

Travis: Well, I mean, yeah. But, like, the Bible is literally one that, like... most churches will just give you one.

Teresa: I don't know. Like I said, they must really need it.

Travis: I guess so...

Teresa: If you're gonna steal the Bible from—

Travis: Well, yeah. If you're gonna steal anything.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Okay. Don't steal books. And hey... don't steal books from *libraries*. They'll give them to you for extended periods of time!

Teresa: But you have to keep renewing them.

Travis: Yeah! But, like... don't steal books...

Teresa: I don't know what the statistics are as far as accidental stealing.

Travis: I do like, though, that the top two most stolen books are the two books that would be the first ones to tell you that it is wrong to steal.

Teresa: Yeah. Yeah. Emily Post was against Prohibition.

Travis: Good. That's good. I agree with you, Emily.

Teresa: Well, that really, uh—that seemed—

Travis: Hurt society parties! How would you drink at a society party?

Teresa: I suppose that's true. But it did... when I first read it, it did strike me as kind of a "Huh, I would've thought the other way?" Because, you know, drinking and drunkenness is something that leads to rudeness in people, often. So I think that it would make sense had she been *for* Prohibition.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: But she was against it.

Travis: But see, I like that, though. Because I look at it the other way around, that it is impolite to tell others what not to do. It's one thing to control yourself. It is impolite to control others, and I—that's... I'm going to project that onto Emily Post and assume that's why she was against it.

Teresa: She always was about leading by example.

Travis: Yeahhh.

Teresa: Um... after World War II, she worked as a—as one of a group of women to bring Jewish orphans to the United States.

Travis: She's—shes, uh, really cool? Um—

Teresa: She is really cool!

Travis: I'm a big fan of Emily Post.

Teresa: [amused] And, as an older woman, she had an entire closet full of red shoes.

Travis: Of red shoes?

Teresa: Red shoes!

Travis: Just red.

Teresa: She loved red shoes, I guess.

Travis: Okay!

Teresa: Alright. Um, so some notable descendants... Peggy Post is the wife of Emily's great-grandson, and she is the current spokeswoman for the Emily Post Institute, and she writes for Good Housekeeping Magazine, succeeding her mother-in-law, who was Elizabeth Post, right? So we talked about Elizabeth a little earlier.

Travis: Mm-hmm?

Teresa: Um, and then Peter Post, Emily's great-grandson, writes the Sunday edition of the Boston Globe column "Etiquette at Work." Um, and he is authored—he authored the bestselling book *Essential Manners for Men*, and *Essential Manners for Couples*.

Travis: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. I think we have *Essential Manners for Couples*.

Teresa: I think we do! Um, Anna Post is Emily Post's great-great-granddaughter. She is the author of *Do I Have to Wear White? Emily Post Answers America's Top Wedding Questions*, as well as *Emily Post's Wedding Parties: Smart Ideas for Stylish Parties from Engagement to Reception and Everything in Between*. And she's the wedding etiquette expert for Brides.com.

Travis: Wow.

Teresa: Uh, Lizzie Post, which is another one of Emily's great-great-granddaughters, is the first member of the fourth generation of Posts—

Travis: Got it.

Teresa: —her book is titled *How do you Work this Life Thing?*

Travis: [snorts] That's really good! I like that title.

Teresa: Which is—it's a little different from the other ones.

Travis: But it's fun.

Teresa: Yeah. Um, she writes about being a 20-something person, uh, and being—you know, an etiquette authority on her blog. And Anna and Lizzie co-authored a book called *Great Get-Togethers: Casual Gatherings and Elegant Parties at Home*.

Travis: So they've done—made it, like, a whole family thing, huh?

Teresa: They're—it is a family affair at the Emily Post Institute.

Travis: I bet their parties are wonderful, and pleasant... and fun, and lots of fun stories, and they end and begin promptly.

Teresa: [laughs] Oh, here it is! Laura, that's her first name. Laura Claridge wrote the book addressing the topic of *Emily Post: Daughter of the Gilded Age, Mistress of American Manners*, which is the first full length biography of the author. That's where all of those—

Travis: Gotcha.

Teresa: —little tidbits I talked about came from.

Travis: Gotcha.

Teresa: So a lot of this stuff is available on the biography section of Emily Post Institute's website, and I really suggest that you go there. There's tons of stuff that I didn't cover. Her being an avid garden architect is one of them, and you can read about her garden projects and—

Travis: I think it's just called garchitect.

Teresa: [holding back laughter] Is it garchitect?

Travis: [sagely] Mm-hmm.

Teresa: You're always great with the portmanteaus.

Travis: [whispering] I love portmanteaus. I love them so much.

Teresa: Um, and I also read a few sections from her beautifully written obituary in the New York Times. Um, so please go and look that up.

Um, and she really—I was just blown away with how full this woman's life was.

Travis: That's the thing. I think that there's so many characters and people from, like, history—even recent history—where they're known for, like, one thing, and then you do a little bit of research and you're like, "Huh."

For example, did you know that Houdini, master escape artist and, you know, magician, was the first person to fly in Australia?

Teresa: No?

Travis: Yeah, he was obsessed with aviation, and no one had flown in Australia yet so he, like, [holding back laughter] went down there and bought a plane—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —and, like, specifically was like, "No one's flown in Australia? Okay, cool. I wanna be the first person to fly." And, like, made a point to go do that so he could be in the record books as the first person to do a sustained flight in Australia.

Teresa: Yeah, so, like, a lot of these people that are kind of icons of the American experience—we just know so little about them. And you should really—if you're interested in this kind of stuff, do some digging on the internet. There's a wealth of information out there.

Travis: Uh, so that's gonna do it for this week. Thank you for joining us. Thank you for Maximum Fun for hosting us on their site. They've got so many great shows on there. We just added a new one called *Dead Pilots Society*, and it is—they take pilots that didn't make it to air, but they have, you know, actors and people come in and perform them.

The first episode is a, uh—a pilot by Thomas Lennon and, uh, Ben Garant from *The State* and *Reno 911*. And it's got, like, Craig Cackowski and Paul F. Tompkins, Ben Schwartz, Janet Varney, and one of the guys heading up the whole project is Ben Blacker, who you may know as one of the writers and creators of *Thrilling Adventure Hour*.

Um, so go check it out! It's really, really good and it's very fun and it's just—I just love the concept in general.

But there's a ton of other shows on Maximum Fun, and they're all great. I'm a big fan of them.

Um, and we also want to say thank you to you, for listening. This show would not exist without you, and we're very, very appreciative of you.

If you like the show, please go on to iTunes, rate, review, subscribe, maybe, you know, tell a friend? It's very, very easy. You just gotta, you know, share... something! We put the link up on Twitter every time a new episode goes up. We put it on Facebook.

If you have anything you would like to comment on, you can go to that Facebook group and just search "*Shmanners*." It's S-H-M-A-N-N-E-R-S. Uh, and find the group, and then, you know, we'll post the episode and we can start a little comment chain after it.

You can also, as I said, follow us on Twitter. @shmannerscast, S-H-M-A-N-N-E-R-S-C-A-S-T. You can email us, shmannerscast@gmail.com. If you have any episode ideas, anything like that, any questions, anything. Um, every week when we have a normal topic episode, we'll post the topic, and you can ask questions about it, and we'll answer 'em for you!

Teresa: So, uh, along with our cross country move, we did not quite have the time I would have liked to dedicate to thanking our lovely listeners for the things that they send us.

So, very quickly, I'd like to go through and do some of those on air!

Um, Mandie and Gambit sent us a lovely picture and a note. Thank you to them. Rach—

Travis: Gam—Gambit is a dog.

Teresa: Is a dog, yes.

Travis: Okay. We should make that clear.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Gambit is a dog.

Teresa: Thank you to Rachel Styles. She sent us some handmade monster booties for our upcoming addition.

Jessica Hagget sent us a lovely letter.

Brian Gline sent us a copy of a children's book that he wrote. That was wonderful, thank you very much.

Brett Treshel and Max—sorry, Matt Miller sent us a postcard. We always love receiving those, thank you.

Um, we got a graduation announcement from Juniper. Congratulations on your recent graduation, and thank you for sending that.

We got a postcard from Caroline, thank you very much.

And, um, we also got a postcard from Cody and Amanda.

We recently received some lovely framed photographs. Um... do you know who those are from?

Travis: I don't, because I'm the worst and I didn't save the package. But they are lovely! [out of the corner of his mouth] And one of 'em might've made it's way into the *My Brother, My Brother, and Me* show!

Teresa: I will continue to sleuth that out. So, whoever sent those to us, thank you very much. They are lovely.

Travis: Um, so—because we are in a period of transition, we no longer have our PO Box. But, we are in Huntington and we will be close to Huntington for the foreseeable future, so if you have anything you would like to send in for the show, or for our on—would you—upcoming addition?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: That's better "oncoming spawn—"

Teresa: [laughs loudly]

Travis: —which is what I've been calling her. Um, anything you'd like to send, you can send it to PO Box 54, Huntington, West Virginia, 25706. Um, and that will make its way to us eventually.

Uh, so I think that's gonna do it for us? Join us again next week!

Teresa: No RSVP required!

Travis: You've been listening to *Shmanners*.

Teresa: Manners, *Shmanners*. Get it?

[theme music plays]

Maximumfun.org.

Comedy and Culture.

Artist Owned.

Listener Supported.