

Shmanners 220: Horses

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Travis: Excuse me, are you a horse?

Teresa: Nay.

Travis: Well that's inconclusive.

Teresa: It's Shmanners!

[theme music plays]

Travis: Hello internet. I'm 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. Hello, my dove.

Teresa: Hello, dear.

Travis: Ah. It's another Saturday morning recording.

Teresa: Well, you know, sometimes mental health comes first.

Travis: And sometimes your baby is unreasonable.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: That's— the other day, I believe it was Thursday, she simply refused to sleep. We would put her down for a nap, and she would say, "Nuh, I'm just gonna lay here and attempt to crawl for hours."

Teresa: She was practicing.

Travis: Yeah, it just resulted in a lot of like, like if you were in a yoga class, she was like the one where you're like, "Why is she in this class?"

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "She should be in a beginner class, what is going on?" Cause like, she just couldn't hold any of the poses.

Teresa: And she would faceplant a lot.

Travis: A lot.

Teresa: Then get mad.

Travis: And then get very mad.

Teresa: And also not sleep.

Travis: So, we're recording on Saturday morning. Baby Dot is joining us in the studio. And it is another special, I would say, Max Fun Drive episode. You'll hear me talk about the Max Fun Drive throughout the episode, but this is just a quick reminder. This is your chance to support the art and artists you love, if you're able to. You become a Max Fun member by choosing the monthly membership level that you are comfortable with and then you get rewards for it. You can check out all the levels and sign up at MaximumFun.org/Join. And this episode, I would say, is very special because this is kind of a crossover.

Teresa: It is a little bit.

Travis: Between Shmanners and My Brother, My Brother and Me.

Teresa: Because... what is it about horses? What is it about horses?

Travis: Well, I'll tell you.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: This is my theory.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: I think the theory is that there's a lot going on with horses. But I think much like dogs, I think horses became a thing that human beings would not be where we are today without the animal that is the horse.

Teresa: Okay, yeah. I can get that.

Travis: More so than even, like, cows, sheep, other domesticated farm animals, I think the horse was a means of conveyance and labor and companionship—

Teresa: And also food.

Travis: And food, and it's beautiful.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: A horse is beautiful. Like, a horse in motion is a beautiful living machine. Of just like, sheer power. I mean, here we are, easily a century into having cars, and we still describe engine power as horsepower.

Teresa: It's true.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: So, okay, that's a very lovely general sentiment. But what is it—

Travis: Also, they're cool! You can ride them! Ha ha! Cowboys!

Teresa: [laughs] Is that what it is? I was ask— like, what is it about horses and MBMBaM? How did—

Travis: Okay, so—

Teresa: Tell the story. Any story.

Travis: Okay. I don't remember how it became so beloved. I mean, there's a lot of Yahoo Answers questions about horses and the horse community. And like, horses are cool and horses are beautiful.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: And I think that the thing about the McElroy brothers, if I might pull back the curtain a little bit, is sometimes there is no dividing line between us unironically loving something and ironically loving something.

Teresa: Mm, okay.

Travis: So like, I cannot tell you how it began, but I can tell you now our sincere love of horses is true and beautiful. But I don't know if it started that way or if it's

just evolved this way. I can't really tell you. But now, I mean, the thing is I do love horses. I've loved horses for a long time. But it is—

Teresa: What's your personal horse experience, then?

Travis: My horsperience?

Teresa: Because I suppose I had always thought that it was more of a myth. A mythos surrounding the horse that you and your brothers were into.

Travis: Well see, this is the thing. Is it?

Teresa: Is it?

Travis: I don't know. Because oftentimes, Justin, Griffin and I will operate as a hive mind and one of us will introduce something and the other two will be like, "Well yeah, of course."

Teresa: Something of, "horses are amazing."

Travis: Horses are amazing, or ghosts are awesome, whatever. Right? And it's just like, "Yeah." And then pretty soon it's like, "Wait, where did my idea of this begin and end versus their suggestion?" I have no idea.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: We just buy into the bit real hard. But my personal horsperience is I remember maybe one of my first, like, conceptual idea— okay, so this is the thing. In pop culture, there is a lot of like, horse as companion and friend.

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: Like, more than just, like, driving the vehicle, right? And so you have, like, the horse in *NeverEnding Story*, or there was a lot of horse stuff in *Hercules* and *Xena*, which I grew up watching every episode of, *Brisco County Jr*, which I loved, his horse was like a character that had a personality and interacted. Like, that's a thing that happens a lot in movies and TV shows, is they give the horse, like, a personality. And so like, that's a thing. Even now, more recently, in *The Witcher* TV show, Roach has his whole personality and relationship with *The Witcher*. So, I think it started there—

Teresa: I can't comment, because I don't watch that show.

Travis: That's fair. But I saw it as like, kind of a big dog that one could ride.

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: And then, I remember going to see a rodeo that came through town.

Teresa: Okay, so rodeo is an experience you've had that I have not.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: I have never been to a rodeo.

Travis: And there was a horse, I believe named Hot Diggity, and I still remember the name to this day. To the point where I took home, like, one of those fancy programs you would pay for, to buy, and it had like a full two-page spread about Hot Diggity, whatever, and he like did tricks. And I thought that was cool. I think the first time I rode a horse I was like twelve.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: And I was, like, at a summer camp thing and rode a horse. But like, that is kind of like my recurring from then on experience with horses, is I was at a thing, there was the chance to ride a horse, I did so for like an hour or two, and then I went home and many years passed before repeat.

Teresa: [laughs] Yes. I had a similar experience. I was at girl scout camp where I first rode a horse. And it was where you have somebody on the lead, right, and then you hold the bridle. Or the reins, I should say. You hold the reins.

Travis: Who knows.

Teresa: And then—

Travis: No one knows what all that stuff's called. That's the trick. That's what they don't tell you. It's all made up.

Teresa: [laughs] But I just remember just being in awe of how big horses can be.

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: I'm 5'2", so I'm not a large person, but just being next to or being on an animal that big is really what clouds my whole impression. Is just the hugeness.

Travis: Oh yeah. I mean, I'm 7'4" and they're still huge to me, you know what I mean? Like I'm still impressed by their size.

Teresa: I think that probably even the smallest, height-wise, horse that I've ever ridden was the Fjord horses that we rode in Scotland on our honeymoon.

Travis: Yeah, we went through—

Teresa: They were quite beefy. No, that's not the right word.

Travis: Stocky?

Teresa: Stocky, yes.

Travis: Well yeah, the one that I rode, he took a lot of work. That was the thing, I rode him— yeah, I rode him and the woman who was coaching us was like, "Yeah, he's a little stubborn, so like, you really gotta get him going." But—

[baby squeals]

Travis: That was baby Dot. She loves horses too. It was a very majestic ride, I would say, through the highlands of Scotland. We, like, rode through a stream and past, like, a 40-year-old church, and then ended the day in an old stone barn having tea off a tarnished silver tea set, surrounded by horses by a roaring fire. It was pretty great, you guys. Pretty storybook stuff.

Teresa: [laughs]

[white noise]

Travis: Hey folks, Travis here. Jumping in to tell you a little bit about the Max Fun Drive. How does it work, you ask? Well, it's easy. You go to MaximumFun.org/Join, you find a membership level that you are comfortable with, and you become a member. It's just that easy. And then when you do, you will pick the shows that you listen to, the shows that are part of your life, the shows that you have come to rely on for entertainment, or for education, or for company, or for all of the above and more. And when you do, about 30% of your membership dues are gonna go to support Max Fun. That does things like help

them pay their staff, keep the lights on, and, you know, fund Max Fun Drive events. But the rest of it goes to the shows you love. So, your membership directly benefits the content and content creators that you love.

And it's, you know, it's tough out there, and we know that there is a lot of uncertainty now and looking at the future, so if you're not able to become a member this year, we totally understand. We totally get it. There is absolutely no pressure and, you know, there's other ways to support. You can share the show with friends, you can share the link to the Max Fun Drive with other people, you can talk about why you love these shows on social media or, you know, in a phone call. Can you believe it? A phone call with someone. All of these things help us.

And there's also rewards. Oh, yeah. If you become a member, there's rewards. And that also counts if you upgrade to a new membership level. For \$5 a month you get access to over 200 hours of bonus content, there's some videos in there, there's some recordings in there, there's some episodes that you won't hear anywhere else. We did a Shmanners episode about The Fartist, Le Petomane, who— well, you'll find out. But his name... the fartist kinda gives a little bit of it away. This year we also recorded an episode about outdated etiquette that no longer applies. But there's content from all Max Fun shows, not just this year but for every Max Fun Drive past. It is pretty much, I think, the best reward and you get it for just \$5 a month.

For \$10 a month, you get all the bonus content as well as a really cool enamel pin. How do I know it's cool? Well, you get to pick it. It's from— there's one for every Max Fun show. You can pick which one you want as well as getting a membership card. And you know what? There's a bunch of other levels, \$20, \$35, but that's just some of the levels that you can find at MaximumFun.org/Join. And once again, we just really appreciate it. So, if you wanna check that out, you can go to MaximumFun.org/Join. Thank you.

[white noise]

Travis: So, why are we talking— are we just writing a love letter to horses, or—

Teresa: We could.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: But horses—

Travis: I'd like to own a horse, but can you really own a horse?

Teresa: No. [laughs]

Travis: I'd like to partner with a horse, become friends with it.

Teresa: You'd like to lease a horse.

Travis: I'd like to lease it from God, maybe.

Teresa: [laughs] We're talking about horses and horseback riding because, like a lot of things, it really shapes the culture of where you are. Especially if, you know, you are a very horse-drawn community.

Travis: Eh?

Teresa: Heh heh heh.

Travis: I would be willing to bet, and I have not, like, read the copy or done any research into it, but I'd be willing to bet that there's probably— and once again, as I've said often on this show, a sociologist could do this better than me— but that there's probably, like, etiquette we still do today with, like, cars and stuff that is just evolved from the overlap of when horse carriages and stuff were, like, the main means of conveyance.

Teresa: I believe so. I have heard, and I don't have any research to back this up, but I have heard that a lot of the bicycle manners that we use are directly descended from horse manners. Things like signaling and stuff like that.

Travis: So, tell me of horses. The year was 60,000 BCE, or whatever.

Teresa: Not quite.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So, first of all let me say that if you are interested in horses, dear listener—

Travis: They're everywhere.

Teresa: It's highly recommended that you watch the PBS series Equus, the Story of the Horse.

Travis: Not the play Equus, that's a much different thing.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So, 6000 years ago...

Travis: [sings soothing tune]

Teresa: On the grasslands of Ukraine, so like, south-west Russia and also west Kazakhstan, you see that this is the point where horses start to move from wild to domesticated.

Travis: They begin to allow us passage on the good ship horse.

Teresa: Right. And—

[baby noises]

Travis: Baby Dot has also gotten very vocal lately. She's not upset, people at home, she's just joining in the conversation.

Teresa: She's having a great time. Here's the thing about horses, right? They don't really need us. They have, you know, if they are allowed to run free and, like, do their thing, they can eat lots of different grasses and berries and, you know, whatever it is that they can find. They also are able to reproduce without us, which is not the way that a lot of our now-domesticated animals are. But also they can, you know, all the things that you think about— horseshoes. Don't really need them, if they're running around.

Travis: No. And they can defend themselves.

Teresa: And they can defend themselves. Same thing with—

Travis: It's not like cows and sheeps and stuff, where it's like, "Oh no, a predator!" Horses can kick and bite real good.

Teresa: That's right, that's right. Same thing with the teeth, right? So, we have talked about how horses get long in the tooth, but if they're running around and, you know, scraping bark and eating things that are hard, their teeth wear down as well, so they can pretty much, like I said, live on without us.

Travis: Hey, little idiom sidebar. Why should you not look a gift horse in the mouth, Teresa?

Teresa: Because if it's a gift, you don't want to insult the person giving it to you by looking at how long their teeth are, ergo how old they are.

Travis: Right. It's rude, folks. That's what it means. Okay. Also, it's champing at the bit, everybody. It's not chomping at the bit. It's champing at the bit. If you're eager to get going, you're champing at the bit. That's what it— it's not chomping at the bit, it's champing at the bit.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: That's just a little thing. Just a little piece from me to you. Um, so, horses— okay. Let's put the tiger on the table and yell at it.

Teresa: [laughs] Okay... what?

Travis: Another little My Brother, My Brother and Me crossover. That might be an idiom we made up.

Teresa: [laughs] I think so.

Travis: But I would be willing to say that... [sighs] as much as I love horses and horse culture and we're gonna talk a lot about it, I think that if you look throughout the human interaction with horses, more often than not, like, the vast majority of the time, I think that the way that human beings have relied on horses or used horses broaches on, or just deep dives into cruelty at a lot of times, right?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: When we're talking about, like, horse shoes, or drawing carriages, or breaking stallions to use, like, I think it is not great. It's not good.

Teresa: So, it's a sliding scale, right? So, there's no evidence that shoeing a horse correctly is painful. Because the outer edge of their hooves is made out of keratin, so the same thing as your fingernail.

Travis: It's like putting an earring through a long fingernail. You don't feel it.

Teresa: Exactly. Exactly. But it requires a lot of upkeep, it requires a lot of cleaning, and if you shoe a horse incorrectly it absolutely can kill that horse. Not

just the immediate pain, but over time changing their gait and, you know, all that kinda stuff. But I do believe, I am one of those staunch believers that I don't believe that horse-drawn carriages should be on vehicular roads. For a couple of reasons. One, it's really hard on their joints. The asphalt. A horse, obvs, is meant to walk on, like, earth.

Travis: Grass and dirt and stuff.

Teresa: But also, a horse's nose is pretty much, like, right up the tailpipe of the car in front of it, and so they're breathing in that exhaust all day, and there's all of the, like, the noises that go with cars, and horses can be easily spooked like that, so they're constantly— it can cause their hearts to race, and so that is something that I think is at the other end.

Travis: Well, and not only that, I mean really if you look throughout, like... there was a long, long time before we got to a point where human beings were like, "You know what? Maybe we shouldn't treat these living beings," and I'm talking about, like, all animals now, "like items. Like items to be used like props for a show." Like, there used to be practices of, like, diving horses.

Teresa: Mm.

Travis: Now, what's interesting is— now, I was thinking about this recently, listening to a podcast called Abandoned Carousel, and they were talking about the last diving horse that was like, up until like 1970.

Teresa: Whoa.

Travis: But like, apparently the horse does it voluntarily, it gets fed well and treated well and there's no danger, and all that stuff. But it's just the kind of thing of like, for a long time horses were treated as, you know, commodities, props, vehicles.

Teresa: This is something that's come full circle.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Because it didn't always. It wasn't always that way.

Travis: Oh yeah?

Teresa: In fact, there's a lot of reverence for horses in the fact that we find so many cave drawings of horses. Especially in the Ardèche Gorge, in southern France, which is known as "the Sistine Chapel of the stone age".

Travis: Ooh!

Teresa: There is a replica of a lot of these different drawings, because obviously the originals are very fragile, so people don't visit those. But it's so prominently featured that there's like a whole room full of beautiful horse paintings. And it's hypothesized that there are so many horses there because they were hunted, but also had a kind of like... a spirit to their being, right? So, you would hunt it and then you would thank it for letting you hunt it. Like that kind of thought process. You know what I mean?

Travis: Revered.

Teresa: Revered, exactly. Exactly. So, it's like a show of respect to the spirit of the horse.

Travis: I can totally get that, because that's another thing about horses: big old eyes. Really easy to, like, read into them of like, emotion and spirit and that kind of thing. I think that's another reason that horses hold such a high place in, like, human experience, is it's really easy to, like, look into those big, beautiful eyes and be like, "I see within you the beauty of your being," or whatever.

Teresa: Exactly. And so—

Travis: Well, hold on. We're going to talk more about horses.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: I promise, everyone. Everyone at home, I know you're loving this. But first, how about a thank you note for our sponsors and little message about the Max Fun Drive?

[theme music]

Travis: We wanna write a thank you to our friends at DoorDash. Thank you so much DoorDash for sponsoring the show. And DoorDash, thank you for making it easy to support restaurants in our community safely. There are thousands of restaurants open for delivery on Door Dash that need your patronage now more than ever. You can support your favorite restaurants on DoorDash because they

bring you the food you're craving right now right to your door, and ordering is easy. You just open the DoorDash app, choose what you wanna eat, and your food will be left safely outside your door with the new contactless delivery drop-off setting. And like I said, a lot of your favorite local restaurants are still open for delivery, and you can find them on the DoorDash app.

Right now our listeners can get \$5 off their first order of \$15 or more, and zero delivery fees for the first month, when you download the Door Dash app and enter code Shmanners. That's \$5 off your first order and zero delivery fees for a month when you download the DoorDash app in the app store and enter code Shmanners. Don't forget, that's code Shmanners for \$5 off your first order with DoorDash.

And I also, real quick, want to remind you that it is Max Fun Drive. You know, this is a low-pressure drive, it's going for a month. We know it's tough out there so if you're not able to become a member, we totally understand. But if you are interested in becoming a member, I would just ask that you do it now, while you're thinking about it. You know, sometimes you can go, you know, extra weeks between episodes. Sometimes you, you know, won't listen to an episode for a couple months. And if that's the case, I don't want you to miss your chance to get all the amazing bonus content and reward levels and all of that stuff. And you know, it's also fun to be part of the action. So, MaximumFun.org/Join. You can also increase your membership or, you know, change the shows you listen to, or any of those things, at MaximumFun.org/Manage.

[theme music]

Travis: Okay, we're back. More about horses.

Teresa: Alright, more about horses.

Travis: Moreses about horses.

Teresa: So, remember that about 6000 years ago mark?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: That is the mark that we believe humans may have actually just started riding the horse. Not only—

Travis: That's the point at which some fool went, "I'm gonna get on that."

Teresa: "I'm gonna get on that!"

Travis: "Hey, you know what? We've been looking at these things for a long time now. I'm gonna jump on one."

Teresa: Before that, like I said, horses were hunted. Also probably used for milk. You can milk a horse, you know, baby horses do it all the time.

Travis: Mm hmm. Well, Meet the Parents led me to believe that you can milk anything. With nipples. I believe was the line.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Gross. Gross!

Travis: It's in the— it's not gross, it's natural. It's nature honey.

Teresa: Okay. So, it's pretty safe to say that before humans starting riding horses they probably just walked everywhere.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Right? So, now that you've been introduced to the idea of speed and distance while riding horse, we have to say that the world would never be the same.

Travis: This is what I'm saying, right? Like, this ability to be able to say, like, "You know what? Before now, the idea of, like, travelling over those mountains or whatever was a four-day, five-day journey. Now we can go there and back in a day." Right? That changes the way you think about the world.

Teresa: Not only that, but you could carry more loads, you could weather greater extremes of travel—

Travis: You could take somebody with you, you could take children with you by sitting them on the horse with you and not having to carry them. I think that— once again, sociologists or historians or whatever could do it better than me. But I would posit that horses, horses to cars to planes to now internet, expanded our concept of the size, like, the scope of influence and experience. Of like, for a long time you would think of, like, the area you were in, and beyond that who cares, right? Like, you're never gonna see it, it doesn't matter. And then you're like, oh,

I can ride a horse, now I'm thinking in terms of like— and maybe railway. Any big travel, ships, that kind of thing. To now internet where it's like, everything is in your fingertips. And horses started it all. I'm saying horses was early internet.

Teresa: Was the first internet. And so, every horse culture across the world has seemed to develop within their breeding of horses what it is exactly they need. So, you can find gigantic Clydesdales bred in Scotland to pull wagons, or small Yucatan horses in arctic Russia who are even able to live comfortably at, like, -50 degrees.

Travis: I don't know what it is about my brain, but you said "are even able to..." and my brain filled in "... open doors." [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs] You know, it's not outside the realm of possibility.

Travis: Like velociraptors. I don't know why that was were my brain went.

Travis: And as horses spread across the globe, so did this reverence of the spirituality of horses. So, it's thought that the myth of the centaur originated—

Travis: Oh, I like how you said that.

Teresa: Centaur.

Travis: Centaur.

Teresa: The first time the Grecian—

Travis: I say cen-tor. Am I wrong? Cen-tar, cen-tor. I dunno. Okay, go on. It's not important.

Teresa: Anyway. The Grecian people saw a rider on a horse, right? That makes sense. If you think about something that's half man, half horse, you see someone riding a horse... maybe that's it.

Travis: It's right there. Yeah. Although, to be fair, it's weird then that they said, "I'm just gonna scoot the human half forward to put it where the head is," instead of just saying like, "Here's a horse and there's a human growing out of the back."

Teresa: [laughs] Okay.

Travis: I guess at that point it's all horse, half human.

Teresa: Yes. Yes.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Now here's the first rung of the proverbial horse ladder that we need to talk about. Is horses for war.

Travis: Warses.

Teresa: Warses. War horses.

Travis: I like the way I said it better.

Teresa: [laughs] Of course you do.

Travis: Of courses.

Teresa: Oh man. Okay. So, when you start using a horse for war, you have to make it so that the horses are exclusive to higher-ranking officers, right? You don't want to send out the front lines on horses, because then you don't have horses anymore, right?

Travis: Yeah. I mean, horses are a resource.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: A resources.

Teresa: [laughs] Oh my God. When does it end?

Travis: I don't know. But for a long time you've gotten think, like, horses were like the tanks.

Teresa: Yes, yes.

Travis: You know, it was the new technology of war.

Teresa: So, what happens is because horses are such a good resource, they become a status symbol. So, higher-ranking officers have more horses. They keep horses. They amass wealth, so then—

Travis: They capture horses from enemies when they, like, yeah.

Teresa: Sure. And then horses themselves becomes a status symbol, and then wealth becomes measured in ability to keep and have horses. And it just—

Travis: Oh, and we talked about this with chivalry, right?

Teresa: Yeah, exactly. Exactly. So, it just keeps going up this ladder, as I talked about, of the horses are so important that it elevates a person's status, and then they get more horses and then amass more wealth, and it really is a cultural phenomenon, if you think about it.

Travis: Yeah. Oh, that's so interesting, yeah. I mean, that completely makes sense, but it's interesting how, like, recursive that is. Like, if you have horses, you get horses. [laughs]

Teresa: Exactly. Exactly. So, let'—

Travis: Step one, get horses. Step two, question mark. Step three, more horses.

Teresa: [laughs] More horses. Let's jump around a little bit. So, let's go—

Travis: Okay. Jump around!

Teresa: We're gonna go up to the 1600s.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: In the Americas.

Travis: I've heard of it, yes.

Teresa: At this point, horses had been introduced by the Spanish to the Americas, and—

Travis: Are horses not native to the US?

Teresa: They are not.

Travis: Aw, but they seemed so natural out there on the great plains.

Teresa: They sure do. They love it. But they are not indigenous.

Travis: Huh.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Okay.

[white noise]

Travis: Hey folks, just jumping in here real quick. After we finished the episode, we went back and did some more research, and we found a dissertation by Yvette Running Horse Collin, that shows evidence that there were horses native to the Americas before there were any settlers here.

If you wanna read more about it, we found it in a story titled "Yes world, there were horses in native culture before the settlers came" on IndianCountryToday.com, and it shows that there was fossil evidence and all of these things showing that it is far more likely, perhaps, that horses originated in the Americas and spread out, and then came back with settlers. So, if you wanna check that out, like I said, IndianCountryToday.com and the title of the story is "Yes world, there were horses in native culture before the settlers came". Thank you, bye. Back to the show!

[white noise]

Teresa: But it is a very important part to the people of the Americas, and so they probably escaped their foreign owners and went back to the wild, right?

Travis: Yes, loved it.

Teresa: And then were domesticated again through a different line. But there are no real, like, trade regulations or specific animal laws that govern the hundreds of horses who began to form in wild herds all over the American west.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Even today, there is a Bureau of Land Management, which is responsible for the care and management of these wild herds that are still going strong in the US.

Travis: Cool.

Teresa: I think that's another reason why it feels like they were native, but they're not.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Okay. So, let's get to the fancy stuff.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Queen Elizabeth herself—

Travis: I've heard of her.

Teresa: Is an avid rider. Again, this has the whole thing about the status of horses, right? She has eight horses all to herself.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: She is in her 90s.

Travis: But she can only ride one at a time.

Teresa: I know. [laughs]

Travis: Unless... wait, hold on. Has she learned how to stack 'em up?

Teresa: [laughs] Oh my God.

Travis: Does she know something I don't?

Teresa: [sighs]

[burp]

Teresa: And this all comes from—

Travis: Did you all just hear that tiny baby burp? I'm gonna leave that in, I'm not gonna edit that out.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Baby Dot is now standing next to me. She just did a tiny— this is a special Max Fun Drive episode, so I'm gonna leave the baby burp in.

Teresa: Oh boy.

Travis: I might even amplify it, I might go back through. Okay, you were saying what about horses?

Teresa: [laughs] Even that seems like a joke to me.

Travis: Just cause I said horses?

Teresa: Yes. [laughs]

Travis: Oh no!

Teresa: Second episode in a row, Teresa's broken. Um, again, the status symbol that we talked about. Starting with the industrial revolution in Europe, if you had land that meant you were very well-off, because cities and towns started to get stacked on top of each other. And you needed land to ride and keep horses. Same thing with ladies in finishing school, right? So, you were taught to ride side-saddle for modesty and show of good breeding.

Travis: I bet that's like— okay, I've never ridden side-saddle before. But it's gotta be harder to stay on, right? Like, that, like...

Teresa: I mean, you— I don't think you can go as fast.

Travis: That's silly.

Teresa: Cause you might fall off.

Travis: That's silly.

Teresa: There is a lot to do with the new, the relatively new, it's only about 200 years old, the idea of horse racing as status and wealth garnering. And the—

[baby squeals]

Teresa: Oh, she's really into the racing.

Travis: Wow, baby Dot.

Teresa: Nay or for? Do you think?

Travis: I don't know.

Teresa: And also, siring for money. These magnificent thoroughbred horses.

Travis: I bet we could do, like, a whole derby episode if we haven't already, right?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: And that's not to say we are endorsing the practice of horse racing or anything along those lines. But it is a huge cultural impact when we talk about, like, day at the races, the Kentucky— all of the derbies. I think there's just the one Kentucky derby.

Teresa: Well, there are lots of horse races, there's the Ascot race and all that kinda stuff. So, it spans many continents. But let's talk about horse riding etiquette.

Travis: Please do.

Teresa: So, horses, like a lot of things, have a learning curve. So, don't try and ride a horse by yourself if you—

Travis: Oh, I thought you meant the horse itself had a learning— which I was like, yeah, okay yeah, you gotta teach it.

Teresa: Well, I mean sure. But I'm talk —I can't, I don't think there are any horses that listen to this show.

Travis: You don't know that.

Teresa: So, I'm talking to people. If you are an inexperienced rider—

Travis: Okay, but if you're a horse you can keep listening. Please don't turn off. Thank you for your support. Horses, if you wanna sign up, you can go to MaximumFun.org/Join/Horses.

Teresa: Oh boy.

Travis: They— it's bigger keys.

Teresa: [laughs] Just let me get through one bullet point—

Travis: Okay, yep, keep going.

Teresa: Travis McElroy.

Travis: You got it, just doing my job.

Teresa: [sighs] So, you shouldn't ride by yourself—

Travis: Listen, I don't wanna interrupt you. It's just, like, this is the only thing I'm bringing to the table is interrupting you with weird, dumb jokes.

Teresa: Again, don't ride by yourself, and also, wear a helmet. Because it's even more dangerous than a bicycle, because it's an animal, right?

Travis: Do you remember when we rode in the highlands and like, they had one helmet that fit me and they were like, "Oh, you're really lucky, we just like, specially ordered this like two weeks ago."

Teresa: Yeah. [laughs]

Travis: Because, like, I have a giant head. And even then, it was tight and it hurt my head a lot. [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs] And next, you should always put the horses in experience order. Although you should also never put the least experienced horse at the end. So, you kind of do almost like, a sandwich, right? A horse-riding sandwich. So then, you want an experienced horse, less experienced horse, and then like middle experienced horse, if you're riding in three. Also, just like cars, you wanna make sure that you have enough room in between horses, so about a horse length between horses you're riding on. Which makes sense. I don't want one horse up another's butt. Can we say butt? I think we can.

Travis: Yeah. Do you think horses were the first smart cars? Cause like, they don't want to run into anything either, right?

Teresa: I guess not.

Travis: Why can't— we just need to give smart cars the AI of horses. This isn't anything. Okay, keep going.

Teresa: Okay. [laughs] Next is if you're going to pass someone on a horse, make sure that they know you are passing, and be sure to pass at the same pace you're riding at, not going faster or slower. If you are riding—

Travis: That is the thing. Most of the time now, most horse-riding you're doing, unless you own a horse and you're going out for, like, a horse ride on your own, if you're like in a group going on a horse ride for like something you've signed up for, it's about the ride and the experience and not how fast you can go.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: So, don't race your friends. Enjoy the surroundings. Enjoy the symbiotic relationship betwixt you and the horse.

Teresa: And speaking of surroundings, if you're riding in a wooded area, make sure you lift a branch that you might pass under straight up when you pass underneath it, because it's super rude to let it fling back in the face of the next person, right?

Travis: That's a good call.

Teresa: Here's something that I actually didn't know, that I was surprised to learn. If you hear a strange noise while riding, you should turn your horse to face the direction of the sound. So, they're easily spooked, right, because they are prey animals. Their eyes on the side of their head and whatnot. And there's a better chance that the animal will feel in control of identifying its surrounding if it's actually looking at the sound, right? And a less chance that it will run off in fear.

Travis: Well, that also makes sense if you think about, like we said earlier, horses can defend themselves, right? But there's a lot of, like, rearing up, you know, involved in that.

Teresa: Yeah, it's difficult to stay on a horse that doesn't want you on there.

Travis: Right. And if something comes at a horse from the side, right, they're not as— all their defense is in the front and the back. Kicking. They can't kick to the side, right? And so, like, putting something scary at the side of a horse is where it's least defensible. That's why things try to sneak up on horses.

Teresa: That makes sense, that makes sense. Remember that horseback riders technically have the right of way in most situations. Hikers and drivers should yield to them, but, you know, always be prepared and conscious of your surroundings, because they might not know that. Never tie a horse with the bridle reins, which is the bit that you use to lead it with, that I talked about earlier. And, you know, make sure that if you tie your horse to something, it's safe and secure. Because, you know, I've seen that –

[baby squeals]

Teresa: That scene in Westerns a bunch, where the horse just, like, takes off. Right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Again, if you're riding close to a road for any reason, if you were riding on a trail I don't think this would apply, but you should probably ride wearing a reflective vest and facing traffic, a lot like you would for walking against traffic. So then, let's see... when you're riding a horse, you need to be respectful of the property you're on. And like we talked about, you probably, at this point, unless you are riding it for actual conveyance or for work, you would be riding in a lot of like, national parks, or like a community farm, or even a private stables, right? And so, you need to be respectful of the space and the owner. So, don't litter, don't antagonize other animals, and don't go off the trail if that's where you're supposed to ride, you know?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: I would like to end us with a few interesting horse facts.

Travis: Please do.

Teresa: In the interest of the interest of horses. [laughs] I thought that was funny. So, horses have almost 360-degree vision. They only have two blind spots, directly in front and directly behind.

Travis: I once again thought for some reason, my brain filled in "they have 360 bones". [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs] You need to work on your active listening skills.

Travis: Yeah, I don't know why my brain is like, "I know the next word! It's bones!" Because, like, it's not bones, brain.

Teresa: [laughs] So, another fun fact, 40 million years ago, after the dinosaurs, is when the first horse-like creature appeared in nature. They looked a little more like dogs, and there is actually a very perfectly preserved fossil of one of these so-called first horses, and you can even see its last meal.

Travis: Oh?

Teresa: Grapes.

Travis: Cool.

Teresa: Yeah. So, the thing that we talked earlier about horses is, like, their kind of, their connective abilities, right, and science has shown that they can express emotions. So, you monitor emotions by their expressive face and their personality. So, they've been show to feel curious, afraid, affectionate and, you know, a lot of other human-like emotions.

[baby squeals]

Teresa: Do you think that she is interested in horse emotions?

Travis: Yes, I think so. Very much.

Teresa: Very much. And they have discovered up to seventeen different facial expressions, which is three more than chimps and one more than dogs.

Travis: Oh boy. Okay. Alright, well, you know what folks, that's gonna do it for us. Thank you so much. Once again, it is the Max Fun Drive. The way it works, you go to MaximumFun.org/Join, you pick a level that you're comfortable with, or maybe you're able to bump up to the next level this year if you're already a member.

Or maybe you're not ready to bump up to the next level. If that's the case, maybe consider boosting. The way boosting works, is that if you're already a member and you're not ready to move up to the next level, you can increase your donation by a little bit of money. It won't make you eligible for those rewards this year, but it is a way to give a little bit more to the art and to the content creators and the content that you love.

So, you can do that at MaximumFun.org/Manage, or you can become a new member at MaximumFun.org/Join. And if you're not able to, we totally understand. Share the links, go to all your social medias and say, "Hey, check out this show." I think this was a really fun episode that I had a lot of good times talking about, so—

Teresa: Well, of course you had good times.

Travis: Yeah, I had fun making my jokes.

Teresa: We talked about horses.

Travis: I mean, I made my jokes. You know, I made my silly little jokes like I like to do.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And if you enjoyed it, you can share it with people.

Teresa: If you go on Twitter and share that you have joined Max Fun, or that you enjoyed this episode and wanna share it with other people who might enjoy it, if you tag us @ShmannersCast, you will get a lovely thank you message. And speaking of joining Twitter, that's where we get a lot of our listener-submitted questions when we take those, so take a look at that. Also, you can email us suggestions. Shmanners@gmail—

Travis: ShmannersCast.

Teresa: ShmannersCast, excuse me, @gmail.com. And you can join our fan-run Facebook group, Shmanners Fanners, if you would love to give and get excellent advice.

Travis: And we would like to thank Brent "Brental Floss" Black for our theme music, which is available as a ringtone wherever ringtones are found. That's the only one I can remember.

Teresa: We thank Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art and Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover picture of that fan-run Facebook group. And, of course, Alex.

Travis: Yes. Couldn't do it without Alex. Thank you so much. And once again, thank you to folks, your membership contributions to Shmanners is what allows us to do stuff like pay Alex. Because one, people should get paid for their work, and two, we have two kids, so there's not always time for us to do all that research, and Alex really helps us out with that. Go check out all the other amazing shows at MaximumFun.org, and one more time, thank you for listening. 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]

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