

## Shmanners 243: Burlesque

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**Travis:** Did you see the banana's burlesque routine?

**Teresa:** Yes, it was very a-peel-ing!

**Travis:** It's *Shmanners*!

[theme music plays]

**Travis:** Hello, internet! This is your husband host, Travis McElroy.

**Teresa:** And this is your wife, Teresa McElroy! Wife host.

**Travis:** Okay! [laughs]

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** And your—

**Teresa:** Well, wait a second. 'Cause you always say, "I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy."

And I say, "And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy."

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

**Teresa:** [laughs] It's extraordinary etiquette...

**Travis:** For ordinary occasions. You'll have to forgive us, this is our first episode.

**Teresa:** That's not true.

**Travis:** Hello, my dove.

**Teresa:** Hello, dear.

**Travis:** How are you?

**Teresa:** I'm well.

**Travis:** Yeah?

**Teresa:** Yeah!

**Travis:** We had, uh, a good baby night sleep last night.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

**Travis:** Uh, which makes for good *Shmanners*. You know, people help out a lot by supporting us, by being Max Fun members, but if people wanna come and put our baby to bed [laughs quietly]—

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** —that also helps make good episodes. Please don't do that. That would be weird.

**Teresa:** That would be weird, especially with, uh, the state of the world. But—

**Travis:** I have, uh... *Shmanners* might not be the place to talk about this, but I have—I have a very overactive imagination.

**Teresa:** We have—we have discussed this before.

**Travis:** Yeah. Every time I look in the baby monitor—we have a video monitor—I have the same thought of, "I hope there's no one in there!" [laughs]

**Teresa:** [laughs] Oh no.

**Travis:** I know!

**Teresa:** Oh no. Well, Travis, it's time to play my favorite game. And that—

**Travis:** Volleyball.

**Teresa:** No, no.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** That is... you try and guess what the topic is about, and I tell you how wrong you are.

**Travis:** No, I know what the topic is—I know—we're talking about burlesque!

**Teresa:** We are! But what is burlesque?

**Travis:** Ah. A burlesque—

**Teresa:** I want you to distill it down.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** To its meaty center.

**Travis:** Okay. Burlesque is a... uh, uh, a choreographed routine, to music, uh, in which someone removes articles of clothing in a, uh—in a very, uh, oftentimes I would say funny way, but in a kind of teasing way.

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** Oh!

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** But...

**Teresa:** What you are talking about is a specific number often included in burlesque called the tease.

**Travis:** Uh, but—

**Teresa:** So—

**Travis:** Wha?

**Teresa:** —listen.

**Travis:** Huh?

**Teresa:** See, this is my favorite game.

**Travis:** I don't like this game! [laughs] For several reasons! What?!

**Teresa:** A burlesque is a literary, dramatic, or musical work intended to cause laughter by caricaturing the manner or spirit of serious works, or by ludicrous treatment of their subjects. The word derives from the Italian, *burlesco*, which is derived from the Italian word *burla*, meaning joke, ridicule, or mockery.

**Travis:** So it's a little bit like [hesitantly] pantomime—am I thinking the right thing?

**Teresa:** Yeah!

**Travis:** What's the thing with, like, Harlequin and, you know, Pantalone—

**Teresa:** Oh, commedia dell'arte.

**Travis:** Thank you, yes. commedia dell'arte, right? Where it's, like, highly exaggerated forms of other existing stories for comedic effect.

**Teresa:** Not necessarily, but yes, you're—

**Travis:** They're—they're a similar vein, right?

**Teresa:** You're in the right region of the world, for sure.

**Travis:** Now, this does make sense to me, because the burlesque shows that I have attended are not just the tease. There's also usually, like, uh, a bit of a clowning act, uh, there is often, like, duet things of, like, heightened love story things.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** I will say, to that point, I have never seen a serious burlesque, so I guess that makes sense. Okay.

**Teresa:** Well, so the form—the art form itself is kind of like sexy satire, right?

**Travis:** Right.

**Teresa:** Um, it's always been about parody, right? Mocking everything from traditional gender roles to politicians of the day.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, and even when performers do, like, more exposed acts, what I was talking about, the tease act, is always more important than the actual strip, right? So—

**Travis:** Well, that's why I said highly choreographed, right? Because when I think about it, it's not just—not that there's anything wrong with it just being the removing of clothing, but that the removing of clothing is itself part of the choreography, right?

**Teresa:** Sure, sure. There are some very famous burlesque acts—I mean, and you can look it up on YouTube—in some of, like, the old Hollywood style, where basically there's a lady doing the tease, and she is only, like, semi-nude at the very end. She takes a bow and leaves. Like, the whole thing was about her taking off stockings, about taking off gloves, playing around behind fans, kind of, like—like, you know, walking around—

**Travis:** It's very tantalizing and titillating, and—

**Teresa:** Exactly, but she never gets naked.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Anyway.

**Travis:** Not that there's anything wrong with nudity.

**Teresa:** That's true. Um, so here—

**Travis:** That's just a different art form.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** Right?

**Teresa:** Yes, yes.

**Travis:** Okay. I think that—and forgive me if this is no longer the appropriate parlance, but exotic dancing, right? Is a different thing.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** Usually a lot more, I would say, gymnastic, a lot more physical—

**Teresa:** Not necessarily.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** But the idea of stripping in particular is different. Um, because burlesque is more about the act, doing the satire or the gimmick or whatever it is, where stripping is about... removing clothing, and dancing. About... jigglin' their stuff.

**Travis:** Any—any and all genders.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** And so it does get a bad rap, for being, quote, a "slutty" art form. And—

**Travis:** Puritanical things. We've talked about this before. When we talk about Christmas, when we talk about parties, when we talk about music, when we talk about dancing, and it's—I will say, because I've been thinking about this recently, and one of the reasons I wanted to talk about it here is, like, I—I think that what we have seen, especially of late, is a big surge in, like, trying to erase rights and protections for sex workers.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** And I think that for whatever reason, the Puritanical beliefs that surrounded, like, music and dance and art and stuff is a lot easier for people to let go of, and it only is recently that we're letting go of Puritanical beliefs around,

like, alcohol, i.e. Prohibition, and yet anything related to nudity or sex or anything like that is like, "[pained] Ooh! Still too taboo. We can't—ooh—boo. [Elmer Fudd noises??]"

**Teresa:** Um, not to say that burlesque performers are sex workers, because, I mean, they could be, but that's not what burlesque is.

**Travis:** But more that anything having to do with revealing a part of the body is instantly, like, "Well, this is clearly all about sex, and so for some reason, sex is bad."

**Teresa:** But here's the thing, right? At this point, the common misconception is burlesque exists for the, quote, "male gaze," right?

**Travis:** Mmm.

**Teresa:** But the confidence and body positivity associated with burlesque actually makes it a favorite art form for feminists.

**Travis:** Hm.

**Teresa:** Yeah!

**Teresa:** Also, it's fun! [laughs quietly]

**Teresa:** There's comedic burlesque, absurdist, punk rock, you name—like, you name it. Like, everything has—there is room for everyone in this art form.

**Travis:** There is a burlesque performer that I enjoy named Anna Phylaxis, and she is, uh, along with her burlesque routine, part of it I would say is axe throwing and knife throwing, which is great.

**Teresa:** Cool.

**Travis:** Which is cool.

**Teresa:** So, let's go back into the history just a bit. It's been around for hundreds of years, and is usually credited as originating in the 17th century Italian theater. Although there's a little bit of evidence that maybe it goes as far back as ancient Greece.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, it was originally—

**Travis:** Well, probably the name doesn't.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** It was probably—if—if it's from Greece, it was probably called something else. If burlesque is an Italian word derived from an Italian word derived from an Italian word—

**Teresa:** Uh-huh.

**Travis:** —Greeks probably called it something different though, right?

**Teresa:** Probably.

**Travis:** They weren't like, "Hey, this is an Italian word, but—"

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** "—let's call it burlesque."

**Teresa:** Uh, it was a comedic interlude that was applied to literature, music, or theater. And it was typically—

**Travis:** It was the halftime show.

**Teresa:** Yeah, kind of! It was typically, like, a humorous parody of traditional, classical, or dramatic work. So, when you said the idea of *commedia dell'arte*, this is kind of like a satire of *commedia dell'arte*, which is satire of other stuff.  
[through laughter] So, like, not—

**Travis:** Can I just say, you have put in my head a really amazing idea of, like, do *Hamlet*, and at intermission have a burlesque parody of *Hamlet* in the middle of it?

**Teresa:** Yeah.



**Travis:** I'm probably not the first person to think of something like that—

**Teresa:** Probably not.

**Travis:** —but I think that that would be so funny to me.

**Teresa:** Um, and it actually draws a lot of inspiration from the English tradition of pantomime.

**Travis:** Yeah, okay.

**Teresa:** Um—

**Travis:** A panto.

**Teresa:** A panto, yes. Burlesque performer Amanda Lynne and her partner, Vincent Mann, described this performers as being kind of like Weird A little Yankovichs of the time.

**Travis:** [gasps] What?!

**Teresa:** So they were satirists, sat—

**Travis:** Parodists?

**Teresa:** —parod—

**Travis:** Parrot heads.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** No. That's not it. [laughs]

**Travis:** Are you sure? Paradisos.

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Travis:** That's what I'm gonna go with, 'cause it's Italian.

**Teresa:** Ahhh.

**Travis:** Paradisos. That doesn't mean that at all.

**Teresa:** Italiano.

**Travis:** [through laughter] M—muy Italiano. Nope!

**Teresa:** Nope. Stop. Alright. Uh, it was incredibly popular in London from, like, the 1830's to 1890's.

**Travis:** I'm not surprised by that. Once again, I think we've plugged it before, but the, uh, Stephen Fry series on Audible about the *Victorian Secrets*, right? Where they talk about, like, that we think of that time period, like, the 1800's, as being very, like, asexual, but actually it was just very repressed?

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** And so anything that sounds like this where it's just like, "Okay, great, we can go and appreciate this thing and have an excuse to go there and not, like, feel judged for it." Like, it feels like it would be wildly popular.

**Teresa:** Well, exactly. And this was considered, quote, a "highbrow" pastime, because of the satirical nature of it, right? And these references that they were making with the burlesque acts, one assumed that you knew what they were talking about, right? So you had to be of a certain educational background if you wanted to enjoy the performance.

**Travis:** Well, I mean, what's inter—you know what that all mean—maybe I'm way off base here, but that makes me think of, like, *The Colbert Report*?

**Teresa:** A little bit, yeah.

**Travis:** Where it was just, like, to get the jokes you had to understand that he was playing this, like, heightened character of, like, what if he was super bought into this stuff and, like, believed it wholeheartedly, so much so that he didn't see the ridiculousness of the things he was saying, right?

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** And almost being—so, I guess what I'm saying is, Stephen Colbert was doing burlesque.

**Teresa:** [holding back laughter] Yes.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Uh, when—

**Travis:** And with that bold claim—

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** —it's time for a thank you note to our sponsors.

[theme music plays]

**Travis:** *Shmanners* is sponsored in part this week by Bombas. And you know what, Teresa?

**Teresa:** What?

**Travis:** I want to write a thank you note to Bombas. I know what you're wondering. For sponsoring the show? Yes, but also, their wonderful socks. But also, their wonderful t-shirts! I'm wearing one of their Bombas t-shirts right this very second.

**Teresa:** I have also enjoyed their lounge pants.

**Travis:** Hmm, indeed. You know what the t-shirt makes me think? Oh, this is so silly. But it makes me think of what... a sheet on a ghost must feel like.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** You know what you see those ghosts and then they just look like sheets and you think, "I bet that's a pretty soft sheet."

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** That's what a Bombas shirt feels like. [holding back laughter] it feels like ghost sheets.

**Teresa:** I like that.

**Travis:** Oh boy. Oh boy. But you know what? It also makes my heart feel good to buy Bombas socks and shirts and pants, because for every pair of socks you purchase, Bombas donates a pair to someone in need. The generosity of Bombas customers has allowed them to donate over 40 million pairs of socks and counting through their nationwide network of 3000 and more giving partners, and to those experiencing homelessness, these socks represent the dignity of putting on clean clothes, a small comfort that's especially important right now.

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[music plays]

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**Together:** Bye-ee!

[music and advertisement end]

**Teresa:** Like a lot of things, like you do, uh, when the burlesque trend made it to the US, things... changed a bit. So, around the 1840's, this was kind of like the golden age of traveling act, right?

**Travis:** Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:** Uh, when we think about this time period, we think about Annie Oakley, we think about carnivals, we think about medicine shows.

**Travis:** Yes, the trains! You know, you're loading up on the trains, the trains arrive, open the doors and everybody follows out. We talked about that in bandwagon! Right? It's the bandwagon stuff! You get that train! Oh, how exci—I don't know why I'm so focused on the train, but it's so exciting to me!

**Teresa:** I don't know, I don't know. Um, some of these art forms would later become vaudeville, but some of these art forms would die out a little bit, right? These forms of entertainment started to blend together, and in the beginning, American burlesque was closer to sketch comedy, really, than it was to any kind of, like, tease or stripping.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, I mean, sure, it could be sexually suggestive or skimpy costumes, but it really focused on the quick-witted satirical dialog, and, you know, the song, the dance, the comedians, the musicians that accompanied that.

**Travis:** Can I tell you one of the things I've always enjoyed? So, we have a friend named Landry who is in a burlesque group in Chicago—I don't know if she still is, but she was for a long time. And what I loved about it was it almost felt

like a really clever way to trick people into coming and appreciating how funny the women in the show were.

**Teresa:** Exactly.

**Travis:** You know, it's like, "Oh, it's burlesque!"

"[mockingly] Oh, that sounds—ugh, oh, burle—[unintelligible]"

Like, "Yeah, but actually, we're amazing clowns, so deal with it!"

**Teresa:** [laughs] Deal with it. Here's the little twist, right? So, in the UK and Europe, burlesque was considered the highbrow, right?

**Travis:** Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:** But enter in the Puritanical ideals of the United States—

**Travis:** [sighs several times]

**Teresa:** And it becomes more of a lower class art form.

**Travis:** Ugh.

**Teresa:** But that does mean that it becomes more accessible to everyone—

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** —working class included.

**Travis:** You know what's a great example of this, folks?

**Teresa:** What?

**Travis:** *Blazing Saddles*, Lili Von Shtupp—

**Teresa:** Yeah!

**Travis:** —Madeline Kahn. This idea of, like, she's in a bustier, you know? And tights.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

**Travis:** But, like, it's really her clowning, right? So there's dudes in the audience, like, whooping and hollering, and male-gazing her, but really they're appreciating—secretly, they might not even know it—her amazing comedy stylings!

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** But it does start to go downhill—

**Travis:** Aw, man.

**Teresa:** —at this point. Um, the 20th century went—like, in the US, censorship laws went wild. Um, and drove burlesque, as kind of the misunderstood art form of the time, even deeper underground. There was a "[sarcastically] great awakening" in morality around 1904—

**Travis:** Gross!

**Teresa:** —where everyone decided that they were—they wanted to return to the American values!

**Travis:** You know—

**Teresa:** Does this sound familiar?

**Travis:** These are all such terrible dog whistles, 'cause the fact of the matter is, morality only seems to be called morality when it means stopping [through laughter] other people from doing things.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Very rarely is someone like, "You know what? I think we need to go back to morality, so I'm going to be more introspective about my own behavior."

It always seems like people just use morality as a word—as an excuse to judge other people and stop them from doing things you don't understand.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** Ugh.

**Teresa:** Uh, and this is where the villainizing of the art form really begins, right? So, it went up to the 1930's in popularity, and then back down, right? Um, but here's the thing.

**Travis:** Okay, please.

**Teresa:** While vaudeville and minstrel shows, rightly, died out, burlesque's quiet flame kept going! It survived!

**Travis:** Good.

**Teresa:** And this was about the time when Josephine Baker was becoming a Parisian legend. Um, and, like—

**Travis:** I really like the way you just said Parisian.

**Teresa:** Why?

**Travis:** Just 'cause, like, it's not how I would've said it, and you said it way prettier than I would've said it. I think I would've said Parisian [pronounced Pa-ree-shun] and you said Parisian [pronounced Pa-rih-si-an]—

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** And it felt like just for a second there was a queen in my booth addressing me.

**Teresa:** Aww.

**Travis:** It was very nice.

**Teresa:** Not to mention, Gypsy Rose Lee was delighting audiences everywhere with her tongue in cheek acts, complete with comedic poems and jokes and



gimmicks, and all that stuff. Um, Gypsy, by the way, had an amazing movie career. Um, and that is actually where the musical movie, all that, comes from.

**Travis:** Okay! Okay.

**Teresa:** And so with this sprinkling of kind of, like, old Hollywood glamour, burlesque has this kind of love-hate relationship with US audiences especially. It is something that is considered, like, you know, that low class morality, right? But still, everybody knows about it? It's kind of like—it's like the movie star, like Bette Davis, you love to hate her, right?

**Travis:** Mm-hmm. It does—it—

**Teresa:** Or Mae West.

**Travis:** Right. It feels a little bit like, um... [sighs] I'm trying to think of a—a similar thing, but it's this—maybe, like, karaoke is a thing where, like, everybody kind of pokes fun at it and it's, like, a fun butt of a joke in TV shows and stuff, but also everyone really enjoys doing it, and it's a super fun thing to do. Where it's just like this kind of idea of, like, burlesque is like, "Oh, oh, [mockingly] you're going to a burlesque show? [laughs] [normal voice] But that does sound fun, I'll go with—" [laughs]

**Teresa:** Yeah, that sounds great. And then it really kind of took a back burner in the US in the 1970's and 80's with feminism and disco and punk rock, and it seemed that, like, this hyper feminine, like, lens a lot of people saw burlesque through made it, like—didn't really have a place in the US anymore. But...

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Enter neo-burlesque.

**Travis:** Neo-bur—it is the one! Now, that's when, uh, if I remember correctly, the Matrix came out and everybody said, "I wanna do a burlesque routine based on the Matrix." Right?

**Teresa:** [laughs] No.

**Travis:** Okay, great.

**Teresa:** Neo-burlesque in the 90's—1990's—

**Travis:** I could not—why can't I remember—Keanu Reeves. I want to say Val Kilmer. That wasn't it, right? Okay. Two wildly different people. Okay, go on.

**Teresa:** So, something about kind of, like, the grungy nature of New York in the 1990's, uh, combined with the punk rock movement and the 80's popularity of drag balls gave burlesque fertile soil to grow and bloom in.

**Travis:** Makes complete sense. Everything you had just said seems like ingredients in the burlesque that I know and love now.

**Teresa:** Absolutely. Um, so this is when Dita Von Teese came into her—I would say her own, right? She did start as an exotic dancer, but as her popularity grew, there was a lot more to her acts, and it became more, I would say, story driven, right?

**Travis:** Yeah. You know, that sounds a lot, too, like Vegas acts, you know?

**Teresa:** Yeah!

**Travis:** Where, like, someone, as they grow more famous, gets to do, like, more and more, uh, with their act, yeah.

**Teresa:** Right. And the Slipper Room in New York City was established in 1999, and it was the first venue built exclusively for neo-burlesque acts, and these were more performance art, right? So, um, nudity was definitely part of it, but there was magic and singing and drag and silks and hoops and clowns and—and all that stuff, and it—

**Travis:** I bet more than a few knives thrown, too.

**Teresa:** Oh, more than a few, I think! Um, and so the LGBTQA+ community has also found a home in this art form! Uh, there are wonderful trans performers, also people like—who use the art to explore attitudes to sex and gender and—

**Travis:** Probably in a way—like, when you're looking for ways to express yourself, probably the reason drag is so popular these days, and, like, these ways of—if you are someone who felt like for so long you couldn't be yourself and, like, that you had to kind of hide who you were away from people, anything where it's just

like, "I feel comfortable performing this thing," right? "There is a, like—a layer of character, just a thin enough veneer that I feel comfortable expressing myself in a way that I never have, because I had to hide myself away for so long," right?

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. So—

**Travis:** Also, it's just fun. That's also probably about—

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** —I don't wanna throw this whole psych—I'm not saying everybody who does it does it for that reason. Some people probably just like it. [laughs]

**Teresa:** Yeah, yeah. Um—

**Travis:** You know, but to that point, it does also make me think about another community that I have seen embrace it very strongly in recent days, which is the nerd community.

**Teresa:** Yeah, totally!

**Travis:** Like, nerdy burlesque, uh, is definitely a thing these days.

**Teresa:** And that makes complete sense, because of its literary and, like, satirical background. That's one of the things that nerds love the best!

**Travis:** There is a group, uh, like, that has done McElroy-based burlesque shows before, which I really enjoy, and I'm going to look up while we talk so that I can credit them.

**Teresa:** Okay. Um, so no matter what people say about burlesque, it's very clear that it has a survival instinct, and it really is a kind of wide open venue, and Julie Atlas Muz put it very simply by saying, "Anyone can perform burlesque if they really want to. You gotta get a costume, you gotta get a gimmick, and then you just need to go up on stage and have the...chutzpah..."

**Travis:** Nailed it.

**Teresa:** "... to do it."

**Travis:** It was D20 Burlesque.

**Teresa:** Oh, very cool!

**Travis:** D20 Burlesque, a, uh, if you couldn't tell by the name, kinda nerdy-based, very good burlesque company.

**Teresa:** Now, um, I have been to a burlesque show.

**Travis:** Yes, I went with you.

**Teresa:** Oh, you did!

**Travis:** Yeah. We went to one at the NO.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** That's not the one you're thinking of?

**Teresa:** No. Do I remember you being there? I don't think I remember you being there.

**Travis:** I was right—okay, now, picture the show. Now look slightly to your left in your memory.

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Travis:** That's me!

**Teresa:** That's you!

**Travis:** That's me, that's this guy! I was a lot younger then.

**Teresa:** That's true.

**Travis:** Oh, excuse me?!

**Teresa:** We were both a lot younger then.

**Travis:** [laughs] Okay. Alright!

**Teresa:** Um, and here are some things that I would suggest that you do if you decide to go to a burlesque show, dear listeners.

**Travis:** And you should.

**Teresa:** It is completely appropriate to be enthusiastic.

**Travis:** Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:** It is not appropriate to yell at the performers, um, because they have a very specific act that they're doing, and things like "Take your top off—"

**Travis:** Mmm, no, no, no.

**Teresa:** —are not allowed.

**Travis:** Now, hooting and hollering—

**Teresa:** Yes!

**Travis:** —done in the right spirit—

**Teresa:** Cheer, clap, whistle, laugh, applaud.

**Travis:** Right, it's great.

**Teresa:** All that stuff.

**Travis:** That's what's going on. But this is not—uh, let's say not for your benefit in that way, right?

**Teresa:** Indeed. It's recommended that you dress up, make a night out of it. Uh, the performers will be very snazzy indeed. That's one of the things. Uh, and—

**Travis:** There's—there's a bit of show to all of it, not just the show onstage.

**Teresa:** Exactly.

**Travis:** But also, you there!

**Teresa:** Exactly!

**Travis:** I picture it as, like, the right time to have a very pink cocktail if you want to. You know what I mean?

**Teresa:** Hmm, indeed!

**Travis:** Something very showy.

**Teresa:** There are some performances you may attend that have more of a dinner theater atmosphere, so light conversation is allowed. Uh, but please do your research and find out if this is, like, a theatrical performance or more of a dinner theater. Uh, make sure that you check out the photography policy.

**Travis:** Correct.

**Teresa:** These are beautiful acts in several different ways, and you may be tempted to take a picture to make a memory, but do make sure that you do whatever the venue, the performer—you know, stay within the rules there.

**Travis:** I would say, uh, no matter what, I would err on the side of not doing it. If you don't know if you can, if you haven't gotten confirmation, don't do it. And to that point, I would say unless they expressly say it's totally cool, no video. Right? Because if you think about it, this is this person's art that they're creating, right? So if you take video of it, and then, like, you post that somewhere or share it with friends, those are people who are then not buying tickets to see the show.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** And that is not good.

**Teresa:** Exactly. Uh, here's another tip. Uh, bring some cash with you, but check with the venue about tipping policies. Many places treat cabaret similarly to drag shows, right? And burlesque might be included in that, and you can at, for example, drag shows, uh, you are often encouraged to give dollar bills to the performers. This is not, though, what you see in TV and movies where you place them in their clothes.

**Travis:** No, no!

**Teresa:** You hand it to them.

**Travis:** No. Or maybe there is a bucket passed.

**Teresa:** Perhaps, yes. Um, but, you know, do your research, and find out if that's something that is encouraged. Um, also, a lot of these performances incorporate a meet and greet afterwards. They're often adjacent to bar facilities if you partake. Um, and don't be afraid to tell a performer that you think they did a really great job.

**Travis:** It's always nice to hear.

**Teresa:** Always nice to hear. Um, but, you know, don't monopolize the performers.

**Travis:** Be respectful, uh, be... [sighs] be cognizant of how you are complimenting them. Um, like, for example, it might feel completely reasonable to say, like, "You are so beautiful." Right? Which, don't get me wrong, I would like to hear that if someone said that to me. But if I had just finished a routine that I'd worked really hard on where I was trying to show off skill and humor and timing and all those things, and the things that you chose to compliment were my physical attributes, it might make me feel like you didn't actually appreciate me as a performer, rather just as an object to be looked upon.

**Teresa:** Maybe find something, a physical that you can talk about, like "Your costume is so detailed. It's beautiful!" Or "I really enjoyed the flexibility of your act."

**Travis:** "Your movements were so precise and sharp, it was so cool to watch."

**Teresa:** Exactly, instead of, "You're so pretty."

**Travis:** Or even just like, "You did your makeup very well!" [laughs] Right?

**Teresa:** Exactly.

**Travis:** Something where it's like you are complimenting an execution of a skill, and not just, like, "You are a pretty person."

**Teresa:** I do have to tell you, though. You are pretty.

**Travis:** I know I'm pretty! That's the thing! I don't need that part complimented. You're—oh, you're pretty too. Yes, you're pretty too.

**Teresa:** Thank you.

**Travis:** [sighs] I said you were a queen but five minutes ago!

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** I'm saying that, like, I know I'm pretty.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** And so I don't need you to compliment that. I wanna know if I did a good job or not.

**Teresa:** Okay. Uh, last thing is, not all of these performances are sold out in the way that, like, Dita Von Teese sells out her performances. Uh, feel free to sit close. A lot of these acts have audience participation, and it shows the performers that you are there to enjoy them. Don't feel bad and sit in the back row if it's not assigned seating. Get up—you don't have to go to the front row, but, you know... enjoy yourself, and be a little closer if you can.

**Travis:** Along those same lines, I would also encourage you to bring friends, to tell friends, to convince friends to go, because you are clearly a smart person. You're listening to *Shmanners* and you're learning about burlesque. But there are probably lots of people in your social circles that do not think of burlesque as, like—in the way that you do. They're not as educated on it, and they might have a little bit of, uh, like, Puritanical silt leftover in the bottom of their pits or whatever, the pits of their hearts, and you can help flush that out by saying—

**Teresa:** Residual pre-conceived notions.

**Travis:** Thank you, that's a much—[wheeze-laughs] better way to put it. That you can say, like, "Hey, come with me to the show. It's gonna be super fun." Right? And then you can also not only bring friends there, but then you're helping kind of the awareness of the art form of burlesque grow and thrive.



**Teresa:** Indeed.

**Travis:** So, that's gonna do it for us. Uh, thank you so much for listening, and of course, thank you to Alex, our researcher, without whom we would not be able to consistently make this show as consistently good as we consistently do.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** So thank you so much, Alex. Um, let's see what else. Uh—

**Teresa:** I'm gonna put—I'm gonna put that on her, uh—on her business cards.

**Travis:** Making the show consistently good, in a consistent way.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Um, we are working on some new merch for folks that I'm excited about.

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Travis:** Um...

**Teresa:** Where can they find that merch?

**Travis:** Oh, they can find it at [mcelroymerch.com](http://mcelroymerch.com). There's new stuff there. Let me tell you all about it in just one second, while Teresa thanks other people and I pull up the document with all the information.

**Teresa:** [laughs] As always, thank you to Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. Also, thank you to Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art. When we have topics that we request questions to, you can submit your questions @shmannerscast.

Also, thank you to Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover banner of our fan-run Facebook Group, *Shmanners Fanners*. Please join that group if you love to give and get excellent advice. But, send your topic suggestions to [shmannerscast@gmail.com](mailto:shmannerscast@gmail.com), where we read—well, Alex reads every single email. We're always looking for idioms, those are quite fun shows. And then your topic suggestions are so helpful to us. We would love to do a show on what you want to hear.

**Travis:** Speaking of, we know that next week's show is going to be about treasure hunting, and specifically if we are translating it into a modern age, geocaching.

**Teresa:** Cooperative treasure hunting.

**Travis:** Sure. So, if you have any questions about proper etiquette and proper ways to geocache, or if you wanna do treasure hunting, you can tweet those at us @shmannerscast.

Uh, now, the new merch. We have a Cerberus pin of the month that benefits the NARAL, designed by Zachary Sterling. The NARAL fights for access to abortion care, birth control, paid parental leave, and protections from pregnancy discrimination.

Uh, we also have a new Knights Templar 2 sticker, which if you haven't watched the *My Brother, My Brother, and Me* TV show is probably very confusing, but it's designed by Tyler Reed, and there's a bunch of other stuff up at mcelroymerch.com.

*The Sawbones Book* is now out in paperback! It's newly revised and updated for 2020. You can get that at [bit.ly/sawbonespaperback](https://bit.ly/sawbonespaperback), and we have a book event coming out for our podcast how-to book, *Everybody Has a Podcast (Except You)*, January 26th at 9 PM Eastern Time. It's a free virtual event. We've partnered with six independent bookstores, and if you preorder from them you'll get an exclusively designed bookplate signed by one of the McElroy brothers while supplies last. Just go to [bit.ly/mcelroypodcastbookevent](https://bit.ly/mcelroypodcastbookevent) for bookstore links and more info. Uh, and don't forget to preorder *The Adventure Zone: Crystal Kingdom* now at [theadventurezonecomic.com](https://theadventurezonecomic.com).

And I think that's gonna do it for us. Join us again next week!

**Teresa:** No RSVP required!

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

**Teresa:** Manners, *Shmanners*. Get it?

[theme music plays]

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