

Shmanners 270: Wigs

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Travis: Why didn't the man buy the wig?

Teresa: I don't know, why?

Travis: [holding back laughter] He refused toupee.

Teresa: [laughs] 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: And hello, internet. Sorry everybody that this episode was late. Uh, I got very sick last week. Not very sick. I got a little sick. I had some tummy sickness last week.

Teresa: Tummy troubles.

Travis: And we actually tried to record this last week.

Teresa: Oh, but poor—poor, poor Travis.

Travis: I apparently was not bringin' the heat. I was not—I had no energy, it seems.

Teresa: It looked almost like you might fall asleep at any moment. [laughs]

Travis: And here's the sad part. I thought I was bringing it. I was like, "You know what? I'm gonna pull it together. I'm gonna do this." And you know it's bad when Teresa has to say, like, "You're barely talking."

And I'm like, "*I'm* barely talking?! Oh, no!"

Teresa: [laughs] Yes. So here we are, back again.

Travis: Back in the saddle, as they say. Who, they say? Cowboys. [laughs]

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Yes. So we are talking this week—well, we're gonna do two episodes, right? So you're gonna get an episode—this is last week's episode today.

Teresa: Mm-hmm, about wigs.

Travis: Wigs. And then you'll get another episode on Friday. What's that one gonna be about? I don't know. Okay. It'll be about something cool.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: It'll be about something good. So, we're talking about wigs.

Teresa: Yes, we are.

Travis: Wigs!

Teresa: Um, so first of all, I would like to say, we have theatrical experience with wigs, being around wigs. But, um, I would like to recommend the documentary *Good Hair* by Chris Rock, because it's a movie about hair culture in the Black community in which wigs and weaves are a big part of.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Um, and not within the realm of our experience. So I'm gonna leave that to him, uh, to talk about, and we will talk about more, like, ancient history stuff.

Travis: Yeah, the history of wigs. Um, speaking of theater, though.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: I do wanna ask.

Teresa: Uh-huh.

Travis: What is your theatrical wig experience? Because I will say, just to cut you off at the pass for a question I just asked—

Teresa: Uh-huh.

Travis: —I have very little. I have, uh—

Teresa: Well, but you learned a little bit about wigs, right?

Travis: Oh, yeah, no. Well, yeah. Yeah!

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: But in shows I've never, uh—I have not worn wigs.

Teresa: Or even pieces or anything?

Travis: No.

Teresa: Ohh.

Travis: Well, I have very beautiful hair, you see.

Teresa: You do, it's true. And a very large head.

Travis: Okay. I was gonna talk about how great my hair is, and you just wanted to swoop in and keep me humble, huh?

Teresa: Your hair is great.

Travis: Yeah, but—

Teresa: All over your... head.

Travis: My giant head. I heard the pause in there!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: You edited yourself mid sentence. All over your... head.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Luckily I'm very confident, and I'm very sure of myself, and yes, I have a large head. It's where I keep my giant brain.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Um, but yeah, I haven't really been wiggled all that much. Most of the time if I do, like, a Shakespeare or something like that, I—I'm trying to remember if I've ever been in one set in a classical setting. I get cast in a lot of modernized, like, settings and stuff like that.

Um, there was one show I played The Grown Up in *Alexander and the Not Not Not—Alexander, Who's Not Not Not Not Not Going to Move*. I think that's the right amount of Nots. But it's the sequel to *Alexander: The No Good, Horrible, Very Bad Day*. And so basically it was like a children's theater show that I was in when I was, like, 20, and I played all the grown-ups.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: So, like, everybody's dad, you know. And so in one scene I played somebody's dad, and the kid that they cast had red hair, so they gave me a wig, and it was the most, like, neon carrot orange...

Teresa: Ooh.

Travis: It was disgu—and it was also, like, wiry?

Teresa: Oh boy.

Travis: And jugged out weird. And somewhere there's a picture of me and I'm, like, wearing a hat, talking to Alexander, and it looks like I'm about to murder him.

Teresa: [laughs] Like Sideshow Bob.

Travis: Yeah, exa—I had this, like, crazy look in my eye, and my hair was all sticky-outy. It's great. What about you, though?

Teresa: Um, well, I also have some pretty nice hair, but I do remember having to wear, like, a super long straight black wig. It was, like, two and a half, maybe three feet long.

Travis: Wow.

Teresa: Um, and it was impossible to maintain. Uh, I had to put it on halfway through the show, so I didn't get a lot of time for primpin'. Um, I ended up buying a large, thin, like, Tupperware in order to just keep it from getting knotted and matted. Uh, it was rough.

Travis: So, the history of wigs.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: I know that they are forever old.

Teresa: Yes they are. Uh, let's start where a lot of these things start. Way back in ancient Egypt.

Travis: Ahh, it was the good times. People—so, here's what I know.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: And I know, folks, that you're going, "You know this because you recorded a bit of it last time." Okay. But I also knew this anyways.

Teresa: You knew this going in.

Travis: That, uh, in ancient Egypt basically everybody shaved their heads and wore wigs, uh, for a couple reasons. One, uh, pests, right?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Always a problem with, like, fleas and stuff, and so if your—

Teresa: Lice.

Travis: Lice, right. So if you shave your head and put on synthetic hair, that is not as much a problem. Also heat. It was very hot.

Teresa: Yeah, sunburn was a big thing, so if you shaved your head and you didn't put something back on top of it, you got burned.

Travis: I also know that they, like, would wear, like, these wax, like, cylinders or cones or something that, like, were scented? And so, like, melt down over your head, smell real good.

Teresa: Yeah, totally.

Travis: Which I always thought was a cool idea, and really hard to do if you're not bald. So—

Teresa: Right. I mean, also, I think that the melting wax on your real hair might—might get... a little sticky.

Travis: This is what I'm saying, right? Hard to do if you got hair under there.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Right. So they would do the wigs. And also, the other thing I know, uh, is that not just a practical but a style component, right? Everybody wanted to look like the pharaoh, right? And so a wig would then allow a very uniform, like, "Well, this is the wig the pharaoh wears and cuts it like this." And so it didn't matter if your hair grew like that or was the same color or whatever. If the cut looked good, you'd just buy a wig, right? That matched that. And they would also do little, like, chin—like, beard—

Teresa: Like beards, yeah.

Travis: —beard wigs, yes.

Teresa: Um, and they could be made of—I mean, depending on your social status they could be made of wool or vegetable fibers, or human hair.

Travis: Hmm. But they also probably did some horse hair in there. I bet there was some animal hair in there.

Teresa: Definitely.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Um, and so it became a very popular way to kind of flash your social status. Um, you could put—

Travis: Put some, like, gold beads in there.

Teresa: Mm-hmm, or braids, or, I mean, rings.

Travis: Animal bones.

Teresa: Anything you wanted, I guess.

Travis: Jelly beans.

Teresa: And other ancient cultures—what? Jelly beans?

Travis: I was just seeing if you were noticing. Okay, we're still—okay! We're still paying attention. Okay. Go ahead.

Teresa: [laughs] Other ancient cultures had a similar love, so the Syrians, the Venetians, Jews, Greeks, Romans, a lot of people used wigs in everyday life.

Travis: Once again, they're practical, right? And—this is what I'll say. I like growing—I have been growing my hair out now for many months.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Uh, I think the last actual haircut I got was October, and I also like to, like, dye my hair different colors now, and it would be way more practical, now

that I'm thinking about it, to just have wigs of different colors and shades and lengths, and just not—

Teresa: Yeah, and it would be a little better for your hair. I mean, bleaching takes a lot of—of, you know, toi... toil? Tr—

Travis: Toll?

Teresa: Toll? Is that it? Yeah.

Travis: Takes a toll, yeah.

Teresa: Yeah, yeah. Is that an idiom?

Travis: No. I mean, I guess. But, like, takes its toll, like, toll collector.

Teresa: Yeah, okay.

Travis: That's pretty—that's a pretty obvious one.

Teresa: That's pretty obvious.

Travis: Uh, but yeah, man. Wigs are practical, and magical.

Teresa: [laughs] Uh, so Roman wigs. I'd like to do a little talk about. Um, we actually don't have a lot of them, but we know that people wore them because of mosaics and statues and things like that. Um—

Travis: And YouTube videos?

Teresa: What? No—

Travis: All of the—okay. Still paying attention. Okay! Got it. Just trying to sneak it in.

Teresa: How many times are you gonna do that?

Travis: Well, just sometimes I make bad jokes, and even as I say it I'm like, "That's dumb." [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs] Anyway, because the humidity in Italy really just destroys it.

Travis: It would just rot it, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And so all genders wore wigs, uh, whether or not they were bald. So wealthy Roman women, for example, very often wore elaborate headpieces that kind of, like, increased the volume and look of their natural hair.

Travis: Isn't that a—that's a thing in, like, French restoration, too, right? Of, like—

Teresa: Absolutely.

Travis: —how big can we get 'em? How big is the wig? They would put birds in there! We'll talk—we'll talk about it later.

Teresa: We'll talk about it. We'll talk about it. Um, and so this was something, again, to show how cool and wealthy you were.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Uh, the higher the hair, the closer to the gods.

Travis: Sure, sure, sure. But it also, I think, uh—because one, right? Of course you're showing status because you can afford these wigs, right? You can afford these things.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: But another thing too you're showing is that you have, like, the time to style them, and the time to, or people to, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And so you're showing not just money as a resource, but leisure. It's much like tanning, why tanning goes in and out of vogue, right?

Teresa: Uh-huh, mm-hmm.

Travis: Where it's just like, the leisure—so quick side note, I think we've talked about tanning before, but—

Teresa: We have!

Travis: —uh, in case we haven't, it used to—

Teresa: No, we have.

Travis: Okay. It used to be that, you know, the fluctuation is, well, if someone has to work outside, right? They don't have wealth and resources, so if you're inside, it's pale, right? And then leisure became about sitting by the beach and sitting by the pool, right? So then tan was in. And then it just keeps going back and forth [crosstalk]

Teresa: As the work moved into factories, the, uh—the leisure class moved outside.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: And vice versa, vice versa. Um, and so here is a very interesting thing. In Asia, specifically China and Japan, wigs weren't really worn as much as in other places. They were very specific to the situation, and usually that situation was theater.

Travis: Yep. Theater. The natural home of the wig.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I don't know.

Teresa: I don't think that's gonna catch on.

Travis: No, I don't think so. That's—that's—go, "Oh, we're reopening Broadway, the great wig house, as they call it."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Ah, those fine wig palaces.

Teresa: Alright.

Travis: We shall trod the board, my wig friends!

Teresa: So, uh, there's actually a museum called the Kyoto Hair Museum, which is devoted to these historic Japanese wigs, and there's 115 examples of wigs on display, all the way from ancient to modern styles.

Travis: Cool, dude!

Teresa: Um, and, you know, we could keep going around the world showing—

Travis: And we will! Next.

Teresa: [laughs] No.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: I think that's enough examples of antiquity.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Uh, but what I would like to talk about next is how wigs factor into the Great Christian Rebrand.

Travis: Oh, I can't wait! But first...! How about a thank you note for our sponsors?

Teresa: Alright!

[theme music plays]

Teresa: *Shmanners* is sponsored in part this week by DoorDash.

Travis: DoorDash? Tell me more-dash!

Teresa: [laughs] Sure-dash!

Travis: Oh!

Teresa: Oh!

Travis: Oh! Okay.

Teresa: I often need things.

Travis: Really?

Teresa: Most of those things are food.

Travis: Uh-huh. Correct.

Teresa: And DoorDash connects me with the restaurants I love right now, right to me. And I can get grocery store essentials.

Travis: What?!

Teresa: Uh, I can get drinks and snacks and other household items delivered under an hour. We love DoorDash, because it always seems that we either are out of diapers or out of wipes.

Travis: Correct. And also bread. We go through bread.

Teresa: Bread, yeah. We go through a lot of bread.

Travis: This is a toast house.

Teresa: Mm-hmm!

Travis: This house enjoys toast.

Teresa: We sure do. And so we can get diapers, wipes, and bread all delivered, and they can be safely left outside our door with contactless delivery drop off. Uh, so for a limited time, our listeners can get 25% off with zero delivery fees on their first order of 15 dollars or more when they download the DoorDash app and enter code "shmannerspod." So, that's 25% off, up to a 10 dollar value, zero delivery fees on your first order, when you download the DoorDash app in the app

store and enter code "shmannerspod." Subject to change, and there are terms that apply.

Travis: We're also supported in part this week by Ruby Coffee. Ruby Coffee Roasters is a small coffee roasting company based in Central Wisconsin, specifically Nelsonville, Wisconsin, population: 191.

Teresa: Ooh!

Travis: Yes. And Ruby Coffee has the goal of making quality coffee approachable to all. And they do!

Teresa: Do you think that maybe a quarter of the people in that town work at Ruby Coffee?

Travis: All of them do.

Teresa: All of them do.

Travis: Even the babies.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: So Ruby's coffee lineup is designed around complex, dynamic coffees while making sure that our roasting profiles make these coffees easy to brew and enjoy, and I really do enjoy them. Uh, we got a couple to sample, and I enjoyed just the heck out of 'em, and here's what I really like. Not just their coffee beans, which I enjoy. But... they also have, like, steepable coffee.

Teresa: So like tea.

Travis: Yes!

Teresa: But... coffee.

Travis: But coffee! So it's like coffee in tea bags, right? That you steep in the water, boom. Because this happens a lot, right? We got—we got kids, right? And sometimes one of us is up earlier than the other one. We don't feel like grinding and waking the other one up and making a whole pot of coffee.

Teresa: Or I need an afternoon pick-me-up.

Travis: Exactly!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: So we just make one cup with the steepable tea bag—it's incredible! It's incredible. You gotta see it to believe it. It's actually not that hard to believe. It's steeped coffee. But it's great. And you can go to rubycoffeeroasters.com, that's R-U-B-Y coffeeroasters.com, and use code "shmanners" to get 20% off your first shipment of any subscription or 15% off of a one-time coffee purchase. One more time: rubycoffeeroasters.com, and used that code "shmanners" to get 20% off your first shipment of any subscription, or 15% off of a one-time coffee purchase.

[dramatic music plays]

Speaker 1: Since the dawn of time, screenwriters have taken months to craft their stories, but now, three Hollywood professionals shall attempt the impossible: break a story in one hour!

[jazzy music plays]

Freddie: That's right. Here on *Story Break*, I, Freddie Wong...

Matt: Matt Arnold...

Will: And Will Campos...

Freddie: The creators behind award-winning shows like *Video Game High School*...

Matt: Have one hour to turn a humble idea into an awesome movie.

Will: Now, an awesome movie starts with an awesome title.

Matt: I chose The Billionaire's Marriage Valley.

Will: Mine was Christmas Pregnant Paradise.

[all laugh]

Matt: Okay. Next, we need a protagonist.

Will: So, I've heard Wario best described as libertarian Mario?

[all laugh]

Freddie: And, of course, every great movie needs a stellar pitch.

Will: In order to get to heaven, sometimes you gotta raise a little hell.

Freddie: [laughs] That's the tagline!

Check out Story Break every week on Maximumfun.org, or wherever you get your podcasts.

[music and ad end]

Travis: Okay. Teresa, you were about to tell us about wigs and how they relate to the Great Christian Rebrand.

Teresa: Yes. Um, so by the Middle Ages...

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: ... wigs were far less common. Couple reasons. First one: everybody's very poor.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Second reason: everybody's very sick.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: 'Cause of the Black Death and stuff?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Uh, and third reason: the church said, "Mmm... that looks—"

Travis: "Too ostentatious!"

Teresa: "—that looks like vanity to me."

Travis: Yes, no, no. We are not vain! For, uh, perfection... we mustn't appreciate ourselves.

Teresa: [laughs quietly] So—

Travis: God wouldn't want that.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: God wants us to be sad.

Teresa: No... that's...

Travis: Hmm.

Teresa: I mean...

Travis: Basically, the church at that point was, like, the opposite of influencers on Instagram, right? Where it was just like, "Don't live, don't laugh, don't love!"

Teresa: [laughs] But it's okay. There weren't a lot of those signs, 'cause hardly anybody could read. So—

Travis: And they also couldn't live. There was a lot of Black Death.

Teresa: [laughs] Um, so women in particular still had to cover their heads, which was part of the whole church thing. But at this time period—

Travis: Modesty over vanity, right?

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Uh, but at this time period, things like kerchiefs and bonnets and wimples and things like—

Travis: A wimple?!

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Tell me of a wimple. What is a wimple?

Teresa: Uh, I believe a wimple is a head covering that also comes down over the neck.

Travis: Hmm! A wimple. Okay.

Teresa: Anyway—

Travis: Fun to say. Say it at home right now! Say it with me. Three, two, one. Wimple. Wasn't that fun, folks? A little interactive fun in the middle of the show. Okay, go on.

Teresa: [laughs] [pause] Alright. But—

Travis: You said I need to bring more energy.

Teresa: You—I—I—I did.

Travis: I'm bringing the energy to the show, Teresa.

Teresa: And I—

Travis: This is why you pay me.

Teresa: —will soon regret it.

Travis: This is why you pay me to be your husband.

Teresa: [laughs quietly] Okay. Now, let's go to the Renaissance, where wigs are back. Yay!

Travis: Everything fun and frivolous is back in the Renaissance. I think there's also some, like, learning stuff in there, too.

Teresa: Some learning.

Travis: But mostly frippery!

Teresa: Again, uh, the frippery may have caused a few problems. Head lice was still a big problem, and it was more hygienic to shave your natural hair and opt for a hairpiece that could be more easily deloused. [laughs] Um, fur hoods were also very popular at the time, and royals began to incorporate wigs back into their noble fashion.

Travis: Okay, yeah.

Teresa: Who can you think of—

Travis: Queen Elizabeth!

Teresa: Ahh, that's it. That's it. That red—

Travis: Immediately pictured.

Teresa: She wore a bright red, tightly curled, Roman-style wig, and it became iconic!

Travis: Mm-hmm, yes, indeed.

Teresa: And because this is considered the Enlightenment, right? Um, a lot of people took that very personally, and women were allowed to wear their hair again, and they loved to wear it. They put all kinds of stuff in it. Uh—

Travis: Is this when they was puttin' birds in there?

Teresa: Not yet.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Not yet.

Travis: Almost.

Teresa: Um, but there were things like jewels, and veils, and shells. And, you know, fun smaller adornments. We were not—not quite up to it. Um, that would take into the 17th century.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Nobody loved wigs more than the French.

Travis: I—yeah. I—I could've told you that. Right? I already know that. Everybody knows that!

Teresa: Everybody knows that. Um, and so the court of all the Louis, uh, Louis XII, Louis XIV—

Travis: Revenge of Louis.

Teresa: [laughs quietly] They all loved... periwigs, is what they were called. So—

Travis: Periwig.

Teresa: Yeah. Um, it was this kind of, like—you know, it was almost like that mullet—mullet style. Business in the front, party in the back. It could be very, very long, worn down the back and pieces next—onto the shoulders, right?

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, and it seems that, like, in Paris, one of the central locations of French culture...

Travis: Mm-hmm?

Teresa: ... uh, wig-makers jumped from 200 in 1673 to 835 in 1765.

Travis: That's a lot more wig-makers.

Teresa: Sure is. It's a ton more. Um, in about a hundred years, right?

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Um, and there was great demand, so if you were part of the lower echelon of society, you probably would have a horse hair or a goat hair wig, but if you also wanted to do your duty to your king, you gave him your hair.

Travis: Yeah! Isn't that—in, uh, *Les Mis*.

Teresa: Oh yeah, yeah.

Travis: Fantine sells her hair.

Teresa: She does.

Travis: And in, uh—what's that? Uh, *The Gift of the Magi*.

Teresa: Oh yeah! That story. So, she sells her hair to buy him a—watch...

Travis: Chain.

Teresa: ... chain. And he—

Travis: He sells his watch.

Teresa: To buy her a comb.

Travis: Yeah, except her hair will grow back, and his watch will not.

Teresa: [laughs loudly]

Travis: That's rarely talked about in that story. My brothers and I have talked about this before. Not great, O. Henry. Could've made it—her hair will grow back! Okay.

Teresa: Alright.

Travis: Also, now she's got a fun pixie cut. Come on, O. Henry! Okay, sorry. He doesn't know what time it is! He's gonna be late for everything.

Teresa: The Sun—the Sun King, his high style made him a fashion icon.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Um, and so his mistress even started a wig trend by wearing her hair in a signature look called the Fontaine. Uh, where the—

Travis: You did that very well.

Teresa: Thank you. The front of her hair was worn curled and piled high above the forehead, and sometimes supported by a wire framework.

Travis: So like a fountain.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: That's why—okay!

Teresa: A little bit, yes. Um, and legend has it that the mistress once lost her cap while hunting with the king, and the marquis tried to tie her hair up using a ribbon, and they both loved it so much that everybody in court began doing it, and they wanted to mimic it, and it spread throughout Europe.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: This is when things like ribbon and lace and trimming and—and animals and birds and all that kind of stuff—

Travis: Yes!

Teresa: —entered the race.

Travis: It became like an arms race of wigs, right?

Teresa: Indeed.

Travis: So you would go to a party and it was like, "Oh, did you see that? She put, like, uh, a—you know, a [stammering] b—bouquet of flowers in her hair."

So the next time you would go and be like, "I have a bouquet of flowers, *and* it's a little park bench with a little street lamp next to it," or whatever, right? And eventually it got to the point where it was, like, live birds. They would make their

wigs in, like, the shape of a cage, right? And then there would be, like, live birds in there. And so as you could imagine, it was gross.

Teresa: [laughs] Uh, not everyone wore live animals in their hair.

Travis: You know, sometimes people would sleep sitting up, right? They would, like, have special chairs that they could have these very elaborately done wigs, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Because it was really hard to attach 'em to your hair, right? It would take—it was a huge process. And so they would just, like, sleep sitting up with kind of a box around it, so that it wouldn't mess up the wig.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Uh, not all of them featured animals. One in particular featured a very... detailed, uh, depiction of a naval battle.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Um, so complete with a miniature ship, and masts, and rigging, and gun sailing, and, you know, if you—if you can't imagine it, please do google.

Travis: Yeah. Very bougie.

Teresa: So bougie, yes. Um, and during the 18th century—

Travis: To the point where I would actually say if I saw that, my first thought would be "bougie." But then it's so bougie that it's like, "Well, I got—but I can't be mad at it." The amount of work and discomfort you must be in...

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Travis: ... like, must be massive!

Teresa: Uh, during the 18th century, this is when everything comes to a height—heh, heh, heh—with the tallest wigs, um, and from then on, it starts to go back down.

Travis: Is this why people wore, like, ruffs and stuff, to help support their neck?

Teresa: No.

Travis: Is that—no?

Teresa: No, ruffs are not about supporting the neck.

Travis: [disappointed] Okay. Not even a little bit?

Teresa: No.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Not even a little bit.

Travis: [quietly] Okay.

Teresa: Um, and so these symbols of wealth-hoarding, basically, right? Because you want to show off how much money you have, uh, in your hair—

Travis: Because you have so much money that you can, like, put live animals in your hair. It's ridi—it is literally like that, like, "I got so much money I don't know what to do with it! So I put a bird in my hair!" Right? It's ridiculous.

Teresa: Right. Uh, and these were—these were quickly, uh, [holding back laughter] chopped from the heads—

Travis: Mm-hmm?!

Teresa: —of the elite, during the French Revolution.

Travis: I'm not saying that I condone the beheading of people. I'm just saying that I can kind of understand the motivation when you're starving, and you look over and here's somebody with a live bird in their hair. And you're like, "Okay, you couldn't've thrown some of that my way? Come on!" I get it.

Teresa: Uh, and things followed suit across the pond as well, in the colonies. Um, and so gentlemen who would closely follow the fashions of London and Paris, uh, they got rid of—

Travis: Chopped their own heads off.

Teresa: [laughs] No.

Travis: No, sorry.

Teresa: Uh, they did find that they were able to tell where your loyalties lie by the wig you wear.

Travis: [gasps]

Teresa: Or lack of wig, right?

Travis: So this is where [unintelligible] wigs.

Teresa: A little bit, yeah.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, and so it started out as kind of like, you could see who was on your team, shirts and skins style.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Uh, but then wigs came back a little bit for very formal occasions.

Travis: Right, right.

Teresa: Wigs come back for the middle class especially in a big way in the Victorian era.

Travis: Oh yeah.

Teresa: Although these wigs were supposed to look very natural, because the no-makeup makeup look that Queen Victoria loved—

Travis: Right, right, right.

Teresa: It was the same thing with wigs, right? So you could have, like, extensions and pieces and stuff, but they were usually made from human hair, and they were disguised to look part of your head, not like a showy wig.

Travis: Now, I have seen you do this before.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: You have a couple things that, like, add length or whatever, mostly for your, like, vintage-y hairstyle things.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I f—I find them mind boggling.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Because I know it's like a wig piece. I know. But it looks so good.

Teresa: Well—

Travis: And you do a very good job with it.

Teresa: Technology these days.

Travis: I'm just saying that when somebody does this very well, and you can't—like, it's—I think it's magic, right? Where it's just—

Teresa: That's the idea. It should look like magic.

Travis: [sighs]

Teresa: But here comes... wigs' mortal enemy. In the 19—

Travis: [dramatically] Doctor Parna—no.

Teresa: [laughs] In the 1920's, what hairstyle was introduced?

Travis: The bob.

Teresa: The bob! So—

Travis: Are you proud of me?

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Did you hear how good I did it? Okay.

Teresa: I am! Great job! Uh—

Travis: I could've made a joke and said "The Rachael," right? But I...

Teresa: [laughs] Did you think of that at the time, or is that—

Travis: No, I just thought of it.

Teresa: Yeah. Yeah.

Travis: Or I would've said The Rachael.

Teresa: So, women started getting their hair cut very short, and often at mens' barber shops. Um, and so there were—there were many, many styles, but it did pretty much dictate that it was your hair.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Um, the—the wig—the wig-makers, the wig-wanters... threw their wigs away.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: [laughs] When the bob came to town. There are things called the Egyptian bob, the Charleston bob, the orchid bob, the coconut bob—

Travis: The Robert Bob.

Teresa: No.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: Maybe, but...

Travis: No.

Teresa: No.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: [holding back laughter] Um, and so, uh—let's do an episode later about the bob.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: It's pretty good.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, slowly, during the latter half of the 20th century, wigs came back, thanks in part to celebrities.

Travis: Oh!

Teresa: Who can you think of who—

Travis: Cher.

Teresa: Yes, and maybe—

Travis: Madonna?

Teresa: —Ma—Dolly Parton—

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: —is famous for her use of wigs.

Travis: I didn't even let you finish it. I didn't let you finish your question. That probably would've helped me.

Teresa: Probably would have, yeah.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: I'm just trying to impress you. I'm just trying to get the answers right.

Teresa: I'm always impressed.

Travis: Oh, good.

Teresa: Uh—

Travis: By my giant head?!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I haven't forgotten, and I never will!

Teresa: Yes, it's impressively big.

Travis: Well, thanks.

Teresa: Yeah, you're welcome.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, so wigs started to become a fashionable and fun accessory. Uh, I mean, Lady Gaga herself says she has over 5,000 wigs. And modern technology has made it easy to find chic synthetic wigs that anyone can afford and use, uh, and wig-makers are constantly thinking up new ways to make them look more and more natural, or more and more exciting and different and... all kinds of stuff!

Travis: Can I, off the top of my head, do some common sense wig etiquette?

Teresa: Sure!

Travis: Okay. We got some questions, but not a lot.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: And so, uh, this is just the top of my head advice. One: people asked in the questions about, like, complimenting a wig, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: I recommend just say, "Your hair looks great," right?

Teresa: Or "I love your hair!"

Travis: And if they wanna say, "Thanks! It's a wig," right? That's cool, right? That's on them. But you don't know who cares, like, one way or the other about it being recognized as a wig, right? There may be some people who, like, it's a wig and they're fine with that, and some people who don't want you to know it's a wig, and so just say, "I love your hair. Your hair looks great." If you wanna do that.

Teresa: Right, because you like it? I bought it.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Right? 'Cause it's mine, 'cause I bought it.

Travis: Right. *Don't* touch people's wigs!

Teresa: No, don't touch people's hair.

Travis: Don't touch people without permission in general.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Right? But, like, just because it is a wig, this is just like cosplay, this is just like any kind of outfit, that it is—I can see why sometimes, if we are not thinking and have impulse control issues, like maybe I do, where you see

something like that and you think, "Well, it's a costume. It's not real. It's fake." Right? So it's somehow not the same? But it is.

Teresa: But it's still on their body.

Travis: Yes, it is on the person's person, so we don't touch people without permission.

Teresa: I used to have very long hair, and one time... it was in high school. I was at the local Mickey D's, in line, waiting for my... probably soda and fries. And a person behind me started, like, petting my long hair.

Travis: Nope! Nope!

Teresa: And I was like, "This is—"

Travis: Nope, nope, nope! Nope, nope!

Teresa: "This is not okay." So I did that slick little move where you, like, pull it back around over your shoulder to the front.

Travis: Yeah. There would've been a Travis-shaped hole in the wall if that happened to me.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Oh? [makes jet noise] I'm out! Uh, let me think. I'm trying to think of other things. Uh, you know, be cool! [laughs] Don't be weird about it.

Teresa: Here's a couple. Um, you probably will want to, uh, style your wig. Wearing it straight out of the package isn't really doin' anybody any favors.

Travis: Yeah, it's not—you're not gonna get the most bang for your buck that way.

Teresa: Right. There are lots of, you know, adept hairstylists that can style the wig, or you—there are lots of YouTube tutorials you can take a look at and, you know, make it your own, make it look good.

Travis: Also, have some storage solutions in mind when you buy it.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: There's some really, uh, like, creative ways. There's one that's, like, a... just like kind of a plastic hook thing, right? That, like, has the ball on one end that you can hang it—uh, hang the wig from, and then the, like, hook that you just, like, hook onto any kind of rack, right?

Teresa: Yes. I would recommend not boxing up your wigs. That usually makes them kind of flat. But if you can find a way to keep the—the cap of the wig kind of rounded, like that—like you talked about, that's really the best idea. Also, make sure that, you know, you brush her every once in a while. Uh, the wig fibers, like hair, can shed with wear. So brush it out before you wear it, fluff it up, put it on, and, uh—and try not to touch it and pull at it, and things like that.

Travis: And look out for open flames. That's true of real hair, that's true of clothing, I guess.

Teresa: [through laughter] Of course.

Travis: Just don't—don't let your wig catch on fire, I guess is a good piece of—that's good etiquette.

Teresa: Um, if you are shopping for a wig, please bring your own wig cap if you are planning on trying on wigs, uh, because it's not—

Travis: That's something to wear over your hair, right? To put the wig on. Okay.

Teresa: Right, it's not really very hygienic, uh, to try on a bunch of wigs on top of your skin. The oils can—can start to deteriorate the wig. Also, if you have chemicals on your hair like, you know, bleaching or—or things like that—

Travis: [mumbling] lice.

Teresa: Sure, yeah. Yeah. You wanna make sure you keep everything with you that you brought in. Um, and if you are looking to get a wig, one of the great ways to do it is to find—just like a haircut, find a picture of a wig that you like, right? And you'll be able to either get a current wig styled like that, or hopefully you can find one that pretty much looks great...

Travis: And feels great.

Teresa: And feels great!

Travis: And makes you feel great. And you know what? It feels great, recording this episode with you.

Teresa: Aww. Feels great, too. I wanna—I wanna talk about one more thing.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, if you are interested in growing and donating your own hair so other people can have wigs, you should really do your research. There are lots of places to donate hair, some of which charge patients, say if you have hair loss due to chemotherapy, for example. Um, some give them away. So make sure that when you go to donate your hair, before you send it in, you know where it's going, and if that aligns with your hopes for your hair.

Travis: You should also make sure you look into, like, what kind of hair they accept, right?

Teresa: Yep.

Travis: 'Cause a lot of places will not accept, like, dyed or treated or anything like that hair. So—

Teresa: And if you are looking for a human hair wig, I also suggest that you research where that hair came from.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: So that you can make a choice that aligns with your morals ethically as well.

Travis: Yes. Make the ethical choice. Uh, thank you so much for *choosing* to listen to *Shmanners*.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: We really appreciate you. We appreciate you being here. Uh, and we appreciate you telling people about this episode! Uh, I had a lot of fun doing this one. I think maybe you had a lot of fun listening to it, and if you did, consider going on social media and tweeting about this episode or telling your friends about it. Send the link directly to somebody and say, like, "Hey, I thought you would like this." And then... send it to 19 more people. That'd be great.

Teresa: [laughs loudly]

Travis: Uh... and go check out all the other amazing McElroy shows at mcelroy.family. Check out all the other Max Fun shows at Maximumfun.org. You can go check out the McElroy merch at mcelroymerch.com. There's a lot of fun stuff there. Uh, let's see. What else, Teresa?

Teresa: We always thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. We also thank Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art. That is @shmatterscast. That's where we get all of our questions for those episodes. And we would also like to thank Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover picture of our fan-run Facebook group, *Shmatters* Fanners! So, go and join that Facebook group if you love to give and get excellent advice.

Also, we are always grateful to our researcher, writer, Alex; and she reads every single email that's sent to shmatterscast@gmail.com. We're always looking for topic suggestions, we're looking for idiom submissions, and if you just wanna, you know, write to Alex and say hey, that's fine too.

Travis: And that's gonna do it for us, so join us again next week.

Teresa: No RSVP required!

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

Teresa: Manners, *Shmatters*. Get it?

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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[music plays]

Jordan: Hey! I'm Jordan Morris, creator of the Max Fun scripted sci-fi comedy podcast *Bubble*. We just released a special episode of *Bubble* to celebrate the launch of our new graphic novel. At SF Sketchfest in 2019 we recorded a live show with Alison Becker, Eliza Skinner, Mike Mitchell, Cristela Alonzo, and special guests Jean Grae, Jonathon Coulton, Jesse Thorn, Nick Wiger, and a bunch of other cool folks.

Speaker 2: We suspect he'll show signs of mutation when in a state of excitement. Now, Annie matched with him on Tinder, so she's gonna act as the honeypot.

[scattered laughter]

Annie: I do enjoy being called a honeypot.

[audience laughs]

Speaker 4: Hey. Know what's better than honey? Gravy.

Annie: [gasps] Ooh, yeah, can I be the gravy sack?

[audience laughs]

Jordan: Out now on Maximumfun.org and wherever you get podcasts. And, pick up the graphic novel at your local bookstore today.

[music and ad end]