

Shmanners 311: Regency Balls

Published May 20, 2022

[Listen here on themcelroy.family](https://themcelroy.family)

Travis: We're talking about balls, right?

Teresa: What?

Travis: We're talking about balls!

Teresa: [wheeze-laughs] Yes, but—[laughs]

Travis: Oh, grow up!

Teresa: [through laughter] When you say it like that!

Travis: It's *Shmanners*.

[theme music plays]

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

Teresa: And I'm your wife host, [through laughter] Teresa [wheezes] McElroy.

Travis: I'm not supposed to be the mature one! This is too much pressure you're putting on me.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Now, I know what people are thinking. You recorded that, so it must have been a planned joke. But—

Teresa: [wheeze-laughs]

Travis: —I recorded it what I'm gonna call take two, 'cause the first time I legitimately said, "We're talking about balls, right?" And you started giggling.

Teresa: [continues laughing]

Travis: Oh my lord.

Teresa: [through laughter] It's just the way that were like... "[deep voice] We're talking about balls, right?" [laughs]

Travis: That's just the way I say things!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: We're, like, 30 seconds into the episode! Is this—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —our— our child's—

Teresa: [through laughter] Oh no.

Travis: Some molars are coming in, and who knows how many molars kids have these days, with their hula hoops and their YouTubes. But some molars are coming in on Dottie, it's been a rough morning, and apparently this is the moment Teresa needed.

Teresa: [sighs]

Travis: This was the catharsis of me saying, completely sincerely, "We're talking about balls, right?"

Teresa: [muffled laughter]

Travis: Oh my God. It's gonna be an episode. It's gonna be an Episode with a capital E.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: You're listening to *Shmanners*.

Teresa: [breathlessly] It's extraordinary etiquette.

Travis: For ordinary occasions! Hello, my dove.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Oh boy. Off to a grand start. Literally we started— I was— the first thing I said when we sat down to record is, "We are professionals—"

Teresa: [laughs loudly]

Travis: "—and we're gonna make some art."

Teresa: [muffled] Oh no!

Travis: And now we can't even get it together. This is our blooper reel, and we're publishing it. Okay, are we ready to get it together?

Teresa: I'm— I'm ready. [sighs]

Travis: You're crying.

Teresa: [through laughter] I know!

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: I was going to say.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: We had a lot of fun when I turned you into a Victorian house maid.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Today, I am going to turn you into a Regency lady.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Who is throwing a ball.

Travis: Now, Regency... uh, let me see if I can get it. So, that's the Prince Regent, right?

Teresa: Correct.

Travis: Prince Regent.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: So I'm gonna say... 1840?

Teresa: Uh... 1811 to 1820.

Travis: Aw, no. That's not very long at all.

Teresa: Is the Regency. I know! But it was very important. Um, because this time period is immortalized by the one and only Jane Austen.

Travis: Ohh, okay. Because, like, when you think about, like, the Victorian era, that's decades and decades—

Teresa: Yeah, oh, it was so long.

Travis: —and decades, right?

Teresa: Indeed.

Travis: Elizabethan era, that's a long time. But the Regency's, like, less than a decade!

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um...

Travis: I should know that. We talk a lot about it.

Teresa: We do.

Travis: And watch a lot of documentaries.

Teresa: Well... [pause] you do?

Travis: Well, I mean, you do, and I'm usually in the room playing, I don't know, my Switch or something.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: You would think I would osmose it.

Teresa: Um, I think that one of the things that— I mean, there have been so many television and movie adaptations of all of Jane Austen's novels. Um, and I think mostly when I think about balls, I think about *Pride and Prejudice*.

Travis: Yes, sure, sure, sure.

Teresa: Because there are two balls that take place in that—

Travis: Big turning point, story points too, right?

Teresa: Oh yes.

Travis: Like, that's when— when Bingley and Darcy first meet Jane and Elizabeth.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Boom! Yes. I got that. And then the second... what is the second one?

Teresa: So, the second— the first ball is a public ball.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Um, and so that is when Bingley and his sister and Darcy make their kind of debut in the village, right? In town. Uh, by being introduced at the public ball. And then later, Bingley throws his own ball at his estate.

Travis: Bingley Bongley. What's the name of the estate? Do you remember? I don't remember.

Teresa: Uhh... not Pemberley, because that is Darcy's estate.

Travis: Uh-huh. Bingley Woods.

Teresa: No.

Travis: Bing— Bing—

Teresa: Netherfield.

Travis: Netherfield. Ooh, top of her head. Okay. So I'm a Regency lady.

Teresa: Yes. Um, so I will talking you through—

Travis: I do like, by the way, how I've moved up in the world.

Teresa: You have.

Travis: 'Cause I was an all-maid, and now I'm a lady.

Teresa: Now you're a lady.

Travis: With a capital L.

Teresa: We're gonna go through the logistics of actually throwing one of these giant parties.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, and so you have to understand the kind of— this was, like, the central event in Regency society.

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: So it would be, um, a young lady of quality was expected—

Travis: Oh, I've always considered myself to be of quality, thank you.

Teresa: Mm-hmm. Would be expected to attend these gatherings, and would take part in a round of different events and balls.

Travis: But this is after your, like, debut, right?

Teresa: Well, no, no, no. So this is known— these times were known as the season, right? Um, the London season, as it was called, took place from October through the end of June, because this was when Parliament sat in London.

Travis: Oh, so when all the influential hobnobbers were there. Okay.

Teresa: Mm-hmm. So both houses, uh, and most people would be interested in the House of Lords.

Travis: Right, yes.

Teresa: Right. Um, but— so both houses were in session, and so people would need to be in attendance in London, and so the Lords would bring their families.

Travis: And also, like, their, uh, not... I mean, secretaries and, you know, the people who weren't necessarily Lords but were high in the rankings of, like, government and stuff.

Teresa: Sure, yeah.

Travis: Okay, go on.

Teresa: People in society and such, like that.

Travis: But wasn't there a thing of, like, if you were young, a young lady, you weren't, like, going to these events? Like, you had to have your debut, right? You had to—

Teresa: Well, you had to be eligible. But the season is where you would make your debut.

Travis: But isn't that a big thing in *Pride and Prejudice* where it's just like all the daughters are there before the first daughter's married, and that's a big deal?

Teresa: Yeah, because there's a— there's a long time spread between them.

Travis: Right, okay.

Teresa: So the youngest one is not 14.

Travis: Right. Kitty?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: No, Mary! Mary's the youngest.

Travis: Okay, great.

Teresa: I think.

Travis: Who knows?

Teresa: Oh no. You asked me too fast.

Travis: I'm sorry.

Teresa: Anyway...

Travis: It's just, I should point out, um, I expect you to know these things because the one with, uh— it's the dude from *Succession* and Keira Knightley?

Teresa: Yeah, Matthew McFadden.

Travis: Is, like, one of your go-to, like, "I need to cheer up," or "I'm gonna put this on in the background while I do something else" movies?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Much like mine is *A Goofy Movie*. Very similar, the two, I would say. A lot of similar themes about family, and acceptance, and pride.

Teresa: Um, so there are, like I said, two types of balls. A public ball, which was held in London venues like the Argyle Room or the Pantheon, or things like that. Um, and they were less selective, and they were open to anyone who would buy a ticket, right? So basically you just had enough money— you had to have enough money to afford a ticket.

Travis: So, big for social climbers, right?

Teresa: Sure, yes.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Yes. And then the private balls were organized by a hostess, who would choose the venue, which was usually their own, like, estate, right?

Travis: Right, got it.

Teresa: Um, and they began— the balls began around 9 or 10 PM.

Travis: Get out of town!

Teresa: And would go until, like, 5 AM the next morning.

Travis: No thank you! Well, I guess if you don't have to get up. [laughs] I guess. And also I suppose if it's hot. What was the months?

Teresa: Uh, October through June.

Travis: Oh, so I guess later I could see it being pretty warm. Where it's just like, we wanna wait for the sun to go down and cool down. But oh my God. But you need time to get ready, I suppose.

Teresa: Yeah. Yeah.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, so several of these parties would even end with breakfast.

Travis: Now, I do like that.

Teresa: So you would feed people breakfast and send them off. Um, so here is an excerpt from Jane Austen's personal writings. She wrote of a private ball that she had attended in 1800.

"There were only 12 dances, of which I danced 9, and was merely prevented from dancing the rest by want of a partner. We began at 10, supped at 1, and were at dean before 5. There were but 50 people in the room."

Travis: I would've danced with her.

Teresa: Of course you would have.

Travis: I think. I don't know, man. I would've been a catch. Everybody would've wanted to dance with me. I'm— I'm pretty great.

Teresa: Okay, but not you as you right now.

Travis: Oh, right. Quality lady.

Teresa: You are quality lady. Uh, let's see. You are a matriarch of a vast estate, and your son, Quincy...

Travis: Wait, I have a son?!

Teresa: Yes, is wearing on your last nerve.

Travis: This is how I find out? Oh, okay.

Teresa: No, no, no.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: You're the matriarch of the estate, so you are—

Travis: I thought I was a young lady!

Teresa: No, no. You are throwing the ball.

Travis: Oh, okay. Can I eventually be a young lady?

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: Okay. Am I— wait. Am I a young matriarch? I had Quincy young, okay?

Teresa: I mean, he's of age, so.

Travis: Okay, but he— so you're saying what, like, 18?

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: I'm gonna say I had Quincy when I was 16, 'cause this is the Regency.

Teresa: [through laughter] Okay.

Travis: Where I'm 34, I'm still young. I'm younger than I am now.

Teresa: Uh-huh.

Travis: Right? I have a lot of good years left on me, so maybe I looking for husband number two.

Teresa: No. This is specifically for Quincy.

Travis: Okay, but I can still have an eye out for husband number two, right?

Teresa: I mean—

Travis: Even if it doesn't happen tonight.

Teresa: You're saying you're a widower— a widow?

Travis: I mean, sure! You said I'm matriarch— well... I— listen. I want to write a rich fiction.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Maybe I'm not a widower... yet. Or a widow yet.

Teresa: Yeah, 'cause you would be— in this scenario, you would be—

Travis: I'm not a widow yet, but maybe my husband's old, and he's on his last legs, so I have an eye out.

Teresa: This is not what I planned.

Travis: Okay, sorry. Okay, what— so I'm throwing a ball for Quincy, 'cause I'm trying to get him married off, 'cause he's on my last nerve.

Teresa: That's right.

Travis: Is he a gambler?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Oh, okay. So I need to get him married to a good woman.

Teresa: And a bad gambler.

Travis: Oh, no! That's the worst. Okay, I need a woman who's gonna straighten him out, which it's Regency, so it's okay to expect a woman to fix a man.

Teresa: [laughs] Okay.

Travis: Okay, great.

Teresa: Um, and so you will offer up your own sprawling estate to the social event of the year. A private ball—

Travis: Okay. I thought you were gonna say "for the marriage," and I would not. Quincy's gotta make his own way in the world.

Teresa: A private ball for all the young ladies and gentlemen in London.

Travis: It wouldn't do to just have just Quincy and, like, 50 girls.

Teresa: No, that's not really allowed.

Travis: No.

Teresa: Okay. So, first things first. You need to decide on the time and place for your event. The setting is easy, you have extensive home and gardens. And you decide that your event will start at 8 PM and go until sunrise.

Travis: Oh, an early one. Okay, great.

Teresa: Right. The date, though.

Travis: Can I have a bouncy castle?

Teresa: They don't have those yet.

Travis: Can I have a regular castle?

Teresa: If you have a castle.

Travis: I have a tiny castle in the estate.

Teresa: Okay, great.

Travis: Yeah, for a place.

Teresa: Um, so you have to think about... your guests are traveling to the event, right? And it is good etiquette for you to schedule the ball during the week of the full moon. Why is that?

Travis: So that werewolves can attend?

Teresa: No.

Travis: So that they can see in the dark when they're riding on the roads?

Teresa: Exactly!

Travis: I knew it was one of those two.

Teresa: Um, so significant moonlight was necessary for safe travel to the ball.

Travis: You're right. If I was gonna throw to— for werewolves, I wouldn't do it... on the full moon. I would do it any other time, right? 'Cause I want the werewolves to attend in human form.

Teresa: As peoples.

Travis: Yes, obviously, sorry. That was silly of me.

Teresa: Um, and so you would also arrange for torches to be placed on the outside the front doors, and along the drive up to your house, because—

Travis: Is that like how people put balloons outside now and they're like, "Look for the driveway with the balloons"?

Teresa: [laughs] Sure!

Travis: Okay, great.

Teresa: That makes sense. Um, okay. So, now that it's decided of when, and where, of course, um, you need to make sure that you have all of sufficient rooms. Okay, so you have a ballroom.

Travis: Obviously.

Teresa: That's great. Um, so it would have to be because you want probably about 20 couples dancing at a time, and then you would also need room for musicians.

Travis: Oh, yeah.

Teresa: Uh, you would require at least 20 by 60-foot space.

Travis: Okay, yeah. At least, yeah.

Teresa: It's a big room. Um, and so dancing is only one aspect. You would also need two retiring or dressing rooms.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Right? One for the ladies, one for the gentlemen.

Travis: Obviously.

Teresa: And ideally you would also need a card room for gentlemen to gamble and play cards in if they're not dancing.

Travis: Okay. I'm not wild about that happening in my home, especially with the whole Quincy issue, but I understand the necessity of it.

Teresa: Uh, and then you need to make sure you have enough accommodations for overnight, if you offer long distance guests.

Travis: Yes. Okay, great. Now, in the card room, do you think I could secretly water down some of, like, the sherry and stuff?

Teresa: Oh, absolutely.

Travis: Yeah, 'cause I don't want people getting too raucous in there.

Teresa: Um, and so, you know, you would probably need enough to host your guests, if they're from a long way away, and also a few spare in case people get too drunk to drive a car.

Travis: Obviously, yeah.

Teresa: Okay. Um, so then, I mean—

Travis: Is there, like, a refreshments room, too?

Teresa: We're getting to it.

Travis: Okay, great.

Teresa: We're getting to it. Um, in Jane Austen's *Emma*, they did not have enough— the Westons did not have enough to accommodate, so they actually rented space at the Crown Inn. 'Cause you think about, they have kind of a large gathering room. They'll have several off rooms. They'll have the kitchen there. They'll have the, um— the guest rooms for people to sleep in, so.

Travis: I've actually set up a bunch of refurbished airstream trailers in the back.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: Turned them into tiny homes. And I know what you're saying. But it's, like, 1813 or whatever. I'm like, yeah, I'm way ahead of my time, dude.

Teresa: [laughs] Okay. So you've decided that you can accommodate about two dozen families for the ball. Um, and of course only families of the highest caliber, and you want to strive to have an equal number of eligible boys and girls.

Travis: Okay. But I'm gonna invite some... uh, if being honest...

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: ... try to pick some lame-o boys so that Quincy really shines.

Teresa: Oh!

Travis: You know what I mean?

Teresa: Interesting.

Travis: I want— it's a ball for Qu— I want Quincy to be the most eligible.

Teresa: It's scandalous.

Travis: I'm not gonna be obvious about it.

Teresa: Well, because you don't wanna be associated with those poor caliber boys.

Travis: No! But listen. Here's what I'm looking for. It's gonna take a little doing. High quality family with low quality sons.

Teresa: Hmm.

Travis: Right? So it seems like, "Oh, this would be a great match. This makes total sense." But then when the parents, like, meet the boys they're like, "Oh my God. What a wet blanket."

Teresa: I knew you would be into this.

Travis: Yeah. That's my plan. Right? If I'm— if I'm trying to get Quincy married off, right? I don't want Quincy to be in the middle of the pack at this party.

Teresa: Okay. Makes sense.

Travis: Right? So I want to get eligible, like, high, awesome, women. And, like, eligible, but like, "Ugh. Oh, she could do better," boys.

Teresa: Okay. Um, so you don't want anyone from too terribly far away, right? So you probably want to stick within your county, and London of course, because you're inviting people during the season. Um, but here's the catch. All of your invitations must be hand-delivered by you.

Travis: By me?!

Teresa: By you. And you're expected, for the call, you can't just hand someone an invitation at the door and turn around and go back. The call is expected to last at least a half an hour. Could last more.

Travis: Oh boy. Okay.

Teresa: So, meaning that you have at least six hours of social calls ahead of you.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: That's a lot.

Travis: At least. 'Cause I know some of these moms are chatty Cathys.

Teresa: And that doesn't include travel time.

Travis: Oh boy. Especially Lady Cathy Chattington. She's the chattiest Cathy of them all.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: But her daughter? Oh! Oh, what a catch. Lori Chattington? She's the one I have my eye on, so I'm willing to deal with Cathy Chattington in order to get Lori there. Okay.

Teresa: Mm-hmm. Um, the invitations that you'll be handing out would be printed by the local printer. Usually what they'll do is they'll make a little, like, border on the card with, like, flowers and stuff. With, you know, smart printing declaring the date and the time. You'll receive back your stack of 80 beautiful cards, each embellished with your little flower border.

Travis: Sure maybe a family, like, seal on there? Like, sig— like, sign on there?

Teresa: Sure, sure, sure. Um—

Travis: I've decided, by the way, my name is Lady Eleanor Quality. I'm a Quality Lady, yeah.

Teresa: Oh. Okay, okay. And you wanted to leave a large—

Travis: But it's spelled like Koala-ty, and then there's a little koala on every card.

Teresa: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Travis: Okay. I just wanna make that clear.

Teresa: I don't know if they would have known at this point— no, I mean...
hmm. When did Australia become a colony?

Travis: I don't know, but it still existed. I discovered koalas.

Teresa: Oh, I see. You did it.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Okay. So then there would be a beautiful, like, spot blank where you would write the gentleman or the lady's name, beautifully, lavishly handwritten.

Travis: Got it, okay.

Teresa: Make them feel very special.

Travis: And then are there RSVPs in there? Was this a thing at this point?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Okay, great.

Teresa: Yes. Uh, and it, uh— because you have a very trustworthy steed and horseman—

Travis: Of course I do.

Teresa: —it only takes a couple days for you to get out everybody's invites, and you have to just wait for their RSVPs to come back.

Travis: Okay. Um, while I wait, we should do a thank you note for our sponsor.

Teresa: Awesome.

[theme music plays]

Travis: I wanna tell you about Babbel.

Teresa: Mm-hmm?

Travis: You know, during the last, uhh... 2+ years, I've had some free time. Uh, decided to spend some time learning a little French.

Teresa: Oh, I remember that!

Travis: Okay, I'm glad.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: 'Cause it was, like, a year of my life spent doing it.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And now I feel a little more... I'm not gonna say fluent. I feel a little more comfortable.

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: I'm a lot better, I've learned, reading French than I am, like, hearing someone say it and being like, "Oh, I don't know." [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: But that's on me. That's not on learning. So if you feel like you're like, "You know what? I'd like to expand not just, like, my mind, but also my ability to,

like, speak and, you know, converse with others," let me recommend Babbel. Babbel is a super fun and easy way to learn a new language, whether you'll be traveling abroad, connecting in a deeper way with family, or you just have some free time. Babbel teaches bite-size language lessons that you'll actually use in the real world. And maybe in video games too, who knows?

Teresa: Oh, well do you remember— so, our daughter takes dance, Bebe does.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: And we were talking about *pas de chat*.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: And you were able to parse out what that meant, literally.

Travis: Yes, there you go. It— man, so much of our language these days, and we talk about this in the idioms episode, is like, borrowed from, like, everywhere. And the ability to be like, "Wait, I know what that means. Wait, hold on." And sometimes you lose the English instructions on a thing you're trying to build for your kids—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —and you have to read 'em in Spanish or French or whatever. And it's useful, I promise. Other language-learning apps use AI for their lessons plan, but Babbel lessons were created by over 100 language experts. With Babbel, you can choose from 14 different languages, including Spanish, French, Italian, and German. Plus, Babbel's speech recognition technology helps you to improve your pronunciation and accent. Right now, save up to 60% off your subscription when you go to Babel.com/shmanners. That's B-A-B-B-E-L.com/shmanners for up to 60% off your subscription. Babbel: language for life.

[music plays]

Graham: Hi! My name is Graham Clark, and I'm one half of the podcast *Stop Podcasting Yourself*, a show that we've recorded for many, many years and, uh, at the moment, instead of being in person, we're recording remotely. And, uh, you wouldn't even notice. You don't even notice the lag.

[extended pause]

Dave: That's right, Graham! And, uh, the great thing about this—

Graham: The—

[pause]

Dave: Go ahead?

Graham: No, you go ahead.

Dave: Okay, and—

Graham: [simultaneously] Okay, go ahead?

[pause]

Dave: And you can listen to us every week on Maximumfun.org.

Graham: Or wherever you get your podcasts.

[pause]

Dave: Your podcasts.

[ad ends]

Speaker One: Did your neighbor back into your car?

John: Bring that case to Judge Judy.

Speaker One: Think the mailman might be the real father?

John: Give that one to Judge Mathis.

Speaker One: But... does your mom want you to flush her ashes down the toilet at Disney World when she passes away?

John: Now, that's my jurisdiction. Welcome to the court of *Judge John Hodgman*, where the people are rule, the disputes are real, and the stakes are often unusual.

Speaker Three: If I got arrested for dumping your ashes in the Jungle Cruise, it would be an honor.

Speaker Four: I don't wanna be part of somebody getting a super yacht.

Speaker Five: I don't know at what point you want to go into this, but we have had a worm bin before.

Speaker One: Available free right now at Maximumfun.org.

John: *Judge John Hodgman*. The court of last resort when your wife won't stop pretending to be a cat and knocking the clean laundry over.

[meow]

[ad ends]

Travis: Okay. Have I received the *repondez s'il vous plaît*?

Teresa: Well, you have a lot to do before you can even tackle the RSVPs.

Travis: I have to hire a band, obviously.

Teresa: Uh, we'll get to that. First, let's talk about candles. This event takes place at night. There's no electricity, obviously.

Travis: Oh, right.

Teresa: Um, you're gonna need a ton of candles.

Travis: And you wanna make sure they're all the same scent. 'Cause if you start mixing scents in there, oh, it's bad. You know? You get honey blossom mixed with, like, an apple berry or something.

Teresa: You know, you're not— you're not wrong.

Travis: Oh, really?

Teresa: Because there are two different types of candles at this period. There are tallow candles, and there are beeswax candles.

Travis: I'm goin' beeswax. All day, every day.

Teresa: That is a good idea for this event, because as a tallow candle burns, it usually smells like whatever animal it's made from.

Travis: Yeah, I'm not doing that. I'm going beeswax.

Teresa: Beeswax, great. Beeswax candles are produced in hour increments, so four, six, or eight hours.

Travis: Goin' eight hours, baby!

Teresa: Okay. Alright.

Travis: Listen. I got money to spend, and Quincy's my only son.

Teresa: So you will probably need about 300 candles.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, and— which would cost about 15 pounds. Now, at this time, 15 pounds is as much as your maid's yearly salary.

Travis: Listen, I feel terrible about that. Now, Travis feels terrible about that. But Lady Koalaty? She's fine with it.

Teresa: Because she wants Quincy outta her house.

Travis: She wants Quincy out of the house. And listen, I'm gonna say Lady Koalaty believes that I have money because I am a good person and I deserve it, right? And maybe if the maid was as good of a person as I was, she would have more money, too.

Teresa: Oh, that's what Lady Koalaty believes?

Travis: That's what Lady Koalaty believes. That's not what Travis believes.

Teresa: Right, okay. So now—

Travis: It's Lady Koalaty, not Lady Equality. Okay? You know what I mean?

Teresa: Oh-ho-ho.

Travis: And she uses that all the time. She says that all the time.

Teresa: So now, um, you have a vast ballroom, which is already outfitted, which means it has mirrors on most of the walls. And there are lots of little, like, shiny glass and crystal and polished metals and everything. And this isn't just to demonstrate your wealth. This is also to help light the room, right? Because as the candles kind of— the light flickers and bounces off of things, it will make it appear brighter.

Travis: And kind of magical, it sounds like, a little bit.

Teresa: A little bit.

Travis: You know, like in that one scene in *Beauty and the Beast* when they're dancing during [singing] *Beauty and the Beast*—

Teresa: Oh yeah.

Travis: And there's, like, light everywhere? You know.

Teresa: So, um, you might actually consider hiring additional maids leading up to the event to help with all the polishing, because everything in the ballroom should be sparkly to help with all that.

Travis: Okay. And I'm gonna pay a little bit extra for them.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Like, more than I normally would, and people would be like, "Oh, she's so generous." But I don't wanna risk them stealing from me, you know what I mean?

Teresa: Ahh.

Travis: So I'm paying them a little bit more to decrease the risk. And, like, I said, I have the money. You know what I mean?

Teresa: Next on the list are flower arrangements. Two of the most popular flowers at the time were roses, not only because they're English, uh, the English gardens were filled with roses at this point, but also lilacs, because of their fragrance.

Because, if people are dancing all night...

Travis: Oh, they're gonna get stank.

Teresa: They're gonna get stinky.

Travis: Right. I've been to, you know, homecomings and proms.

Teresa: [laughs] Not only were the flowers for decoration, they were literally to perfume the air.

Travis: Especially if people were bringing, like, those gross wigs, you know? That have been sitting there unwashed for months.

Teresa: Um—

Travis: Maybe with birds in 'em. Was that Regency?

Teresa: No, it wasn't.

Travis: No, okay.

Teresa: But there are some people at this time period who would have worn wigs.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: But not— not most people.

Travis: Not me.

Teresa: But the clothing was very stiff, and thick, and hardly ever washed. Um, for the men. Uh, women's clothing was actually fairly light and breezy at this point, as a neoclassical movement where— it was quite light and flowy, which is good.

Travis: Great.

Teresa: Okay. One of the other things that you'll need, um, is a chalked dance floor.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: It was quite popular at the time. Um, it would be either a floral pattern or different— like, you could do paisleys or, you know, other kind of, like, designs.

Travis: Wait. Like, drawn on with chalk?

Teresa: Yes. You would hire someone to design a chalk design on your floor for a couple reasons. I mean, first of all, it's beautiful.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: But also, if your dance floor wasn't used very often, the chalking would cover it up and make it look a lot more used, right? And it would also protect people from slipping and falling.

Travis: Yeah, okay.

Teresa: It created a lot more, um...

Travis: 'Cause they didn't have, like, rubber. They didn't have any, like, things to get—

Teresa: A lot more grit in between the shoes and the floor. And of course, I mean, the chalking would be ruined by the end of the night, but it was—

Travis: But I bet that that was, like, a, like, thing that you were proud of?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Like, you could see how well-danced the floor was. That you could be like, "This was a success. Look how, like, scuffed everything is."

Teresa: Oh yeah!

Travis: "People were really breakin' it down out there. Did you see that dance circle? Even Cathy Chattington got in there and busted a move."

Teresa: Next, speaking of busting a move, you have to hire musicians. And also, where are you going to put them? Um, so string musicians were very popular at the time. Um, you would, you know, want to hire a young band who knew all of the newest dance songs.

Travis: Absolutely, yes.

Teresa: That people like. Um, and so they were often situated in landings or little niches or things like that, and at public balls they might even be in the center of the dance floor.

Travis: I'm going to hire—

Teresa: Uh, which is not gonna happen for you.

Travis: No. I'm going to hire the Boys of Fallout.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Um, from the— the nearby, uh, county, Punk. Um... uh, well, Pop Punk. Um, it's sort of on the border of county Pop and county Punk.

Teresa: Uh-huh.

Travis: And I'm gonna have them play, 'cause the kids seem to love the Boys of Fallout.

Teresa: Okay. So they will be situated on an upper balcony, which actually has a retiring room behind it, which is good.

Travis: That'll be good.

Teresa: Because dance sets of the Regency ball era would last for an hour at a time. This is a long set.

Travis: Oh, wow. But then you have to have a break in there, right? For people to socialize.

Teresa: Right, yeah. So you would do the dance for an hour, and then take a break.

Travis: Do a little dance. Take a little break. Refresh.

Teresa: Last thing: food.

Travis: Yeah, obviously, right? If they're gonna be there all night—

Teresa: You've got to feed these people.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Um, so during the dances and, you know, the breaks in between sets, you would have to make sure that the— your servants were circulating with trays of ices and cold punch.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: To keep people cool after they danced.

Travis: And this is, like, alcoholic punch.

Teresa: Oh, yes.

Travis: This is the old-school punch, right?

Teresa: Rum, brandy, wine, all that stuff.

Travis: We've talked about punch, I think, on the show before. But basically, think— when you think punch, a Long Island Iced Tea is, like, the punch that they would've had. Where it's, like, five different kinds of alcohol and, like, one nonalcoholic thing to, like, mix in it, or whatever.

Teresa: And you'll need lots of ice as well. Very expensive at this point.

Travis: They weren't doing, like, water, right? In 1810 to 1820?

Teresa: Well, so there was a... there was a watered-down wine.

Travis: Like small beer, but like small wine.

Teresa: I mean, a little bit, yeah. Mixed with sugar. It was actually often served either at room temperature or warm.

Travis: Oh, really? Okay.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: So kind of like mulled, almost?

Teresa: Yeah, but without the spices.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Yeah. Um, and then you will have a supper, usually between 11 and 1 you'll have a supper for everyone.

Travis: So it's like fourthmeal? Taco Bell, fourthmeal, live mas.

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Yeah. I mean, 'cause you've been dancing and socializing and it takes a long time.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Okay. A ball of this size in the Regency era may have included up to 60 dishes.

Travis: Holy—! Okay. But you know what? For my son, for Quincy Koalaty, it's done. Yes. Get this boy out of my house.

Teresa: [laughs] One of the most popular dishes of the time was called white soup. It was made with veal stock, egg yolks, ground almonds, and cream.

Travis: That sounds thick.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Rich!

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: But to be fair, thick and rich is exactly the kind of lady I want Quincy to marry.

Teresa: [laughs] Um, and this was no small feat, because remember that—

Travis: I don't want her to have small feet, either.

Teresa: [sarcastic laughter] There's no refrigeration, and there's not a gas or electric stove, right? So, um—

Travis: We probably had a cold room though, right? If I've got an estate that big, I've got something underground.

Teresa: Yes, you probably do have a cellar or something like that. Um, but— so you'll have to speak with your chef about what may be available for this.

Travis: It is just occurring to me, and I— like, this is gonna sound like a joke, but how many of these balls probably resulted in, like, "Did you hear about the ball last week?"

"Oh yes. Everyone got food poisoning."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Right? Like...

Teresa: You would try not to poison your guests.

Travis: I mean, obviously— yeah, obviously you're trying not to. But, like, they didn't understand the danger zone and, like, washing hands and, like, keeping things at certain temperatures or whatever. So you gotta think that there was a lot of, like, "Oh yeah, it seems like half of everybody drank too much and couldn't stop throwing up for the next day." Right?

Teresa: Maybe. Maybe. Um, so there would often be an assortment of cold meats.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Uh, poached salmon and things like that. You would have different vegetables. Um—

Travis: Nobody touched those.

Teresa: Well—[laughs] I'm reminded from, uh— from *Pride and Prejudice*, when Mr. Collins talks about exemplary boiled potatoes.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Um, then salads and fruits, biscuits, cookies, cakes, cheeses.

Travis: That's what everybody's going for.

Teresa: Pies, ice creams, and trifles.

Travis: Do you think that they did that thing too where, like, they put out everything, and everybody's, like, waiting for someone to be the first person to, like, grab a cookie or whatever? And then, like, once one person grabs a cookie everybody's like, "Oh, thank God. It's cookie time." Right?

Teresa: [laughs] Maybe.

Travis: Yeah. That's what Travis McElroy brings to the party, by the way. If you're like, "I'm worried no one will eat," let me come to your party. I will eat first, and show everyone that it's totally okay.

Teresa: Here is one dish that your chef suggests, because it is the rage at the time: chicken testicles.

Travis: So we *are* talking about balls.

Teresa: Mm-hmm, a little bit.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, so it is—

Travis: These have another name, too. They're, like, Rocky Mountain oysters or something? Is that chicken— or no, is that pig?

Teresa: Hmm. I'm not quite sure.

Travis: Or no, Rocky Mountain oysters is, uh, bull testicles, if I'm not mistaken.

Teresa: So, what these are is it is, uh, ground chicken testicles surrounded with, you know, various other meats, because they're not very big. Um, and then they would be dipped in jelly, and then covered in a very thick sauce. Um, and they were very popular.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Uh, they were introduced by French chef Antonin Careme.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Now we've got—

Travis: I do like the idea of Antonin being like, "[sighs]" just a big bowl of testicles when he's done making a bunch of, like, chicken— or a bunch of rooster. He's like, "I just hate that this is going to waste. I'm gonna find something to do with these testicles."

Teresa: Nice. Okay. So... you've run down your list. You've invited everyone of consequence.

Travis: Check.

Teresa: You've handed out the invitations.

Travis: Check.

Teresa: You have prepared your home by opening up all of your extra rooms, chalking the dance floor—

Travis: I made it look like there's a big ravine in the middle through forced perspective.

Teresa: [laughs] And polishing every single thing that you own. Uh, you've taken—

Travis: Sure. Even Quincy.

Teresa: [wheezes] Even Quincy. You have, um, taken stock of all of your pantry items and everything in your cellar. You've sent your chef to the market, and next week we will be doing a procedural on attending the ball.

Travis: Oh, okay. Now, at what point in the process— and I think you might have skipped over it— do I make sure that there is, like, a detective in attendance, should there be some kind of jewel thief or, like, a murder? Or something. Like—

Teresa: Well, you would definitely invite the local constabulary.

Travis: Okay, excellent, cool. Just wanted to make sure we're covered. So this is, like, part one.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: This is Lady Koalaty throws the ball. And then next week I'll be Lori Chattington?

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: Who attends the ball, right?

Teresa: Okay, yes.

Travis: You promise?

Teresa: [amused] Yes.

Travis: 'Cause when you said I was a lady of quality...

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I thought I would be going *to* the ball, and I was really excited about it.

Teresa: You're *throwing* the ball for Quincy.

Travis: Okay. Lady Koalaty is throwing the ball. Lori Chattington is attending the ball. Do you promise?

Teresa: I promise.

Travis: Okay. Thank you, everybody, for joining us. Um, thank you to Alex, our researcher, without whom we would not be able to make this show. Thank you to Rachel, our editor, without whom we would not be able to make this show. Thank you to you for listening. We could make the show without you, but why?

Teresa: I like this new patter.

Travis: Thank you.

Teresa: This is only recent to the last, what? 10, 15 episodes?

Travis: Can I tell you why I'm doing it?

Teresa: Why?

Travis: 'Cause, like, the first five times I said it, it made you laugh.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And so now I'm just gonna keep doing it. Because if it makes *you* laugh, it's either good, or juvenile. It's one of those two.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Lordy loo. Okay! Um, thank you to Maximumfun.org, our podcast home. If you want to find a lot of podcasts of quality that even Lady Koalaty would listen to, go to Maximumfun.org. If you want to find out all of the other McElroy projects, you can go to mcelroy.family. They're all there.

Um, speaking of McElroy projects, as you're listening to this on Friday, we are going to be doing a live TAZ virtual show tonight. Um, it's *Adventure Zone*. I'm going to be running it, playing a game called Dread, where the mechanic is instead of dice, you use a Jenga tower to decide success on rolls. It's really wild. It's gonna be really fun. Uh, so you can get tickets for that at mcelroy.family.

Also, if you're in the Phoenix area or if you are going to be attending or want to attend Phoenix Fan Fusion, next week I will be there! Um, I will be attending. If you go to PHXfanfusion.com/travismcelroy, you can get tickets there, and that benefits me if you use that link.

Um, let's see. What else? Oh, go check out all of the great merch at mcelroymerch.com. Um... what else, Teresa?

Teresa: Well, we always thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. Thank you to Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art. That's @shmannerscast. Thank you to Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover picture of our fan-run Facebook group, *Shmanners* Fanners. If you love to give and get excellent advice, go ahead and join that group today.

Um, send in your topic suggestions and your idiom submissions to shmannerscast@gmail.com. Say hello to Alex. She reads every email. Got it.

Travis: Okay. That's gonna do it for us. Join us again next week.

Teresa: No RSVP required.

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

Teresa: [through a heavy sigh] Manners, *Shmanners*. Get it.

[theme music plays]

[chord]

Maximumfun.org.

Comedy and Culture.

Artist Owned.

Audience Supported.