

Shmanners 302: Tennis

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Travis: Do you know why this show is like a tennis match?

Teresa: No, why?

Travis: 'Cause it starts with love.

Teresa: It's *Shmanners*.

[theme music plays]

Travis: Hello, internet! It's 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 occasion! Do you get it? I couldn't tell if you were—

Teresa: I did get it.

Travis: —disappointed by that.

Teresa: I did get it. [laughs quietly]

Travis: 'Cause, like, the f— you start— everybody starts with love, right? 'Cause you start with 00, and it's called love.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: So it starts with love!

Teresa: I— I guess *Shmanners* starts with love.

Travis: What?! It started from a place of— I mean, not every episode might start with love, but it started with love, 'cause we fell in love.

Teresa: Ohh, okay. So you're taking it all the way back.

Travis: Yeah, it started with love! Starts with love.

Teresa: Okay. Alright, fine.

Travis: Aw, that was a long walk. Oh!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Glad I got you on board. Glad I got you on board. So, we're talking about tennis.

Teresa: We are. We're willing spring into existence here in Ohio. Um, and it is fighting the whole time.

Travis: That is how it works here.

Teresa: I know!

Travis: We're, like— no, I'm agreeing with you.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Because, like, what, three days ago it was, like, 70 degrees outside?

Teresa: I know. Ugh!

Travis: And this morning it was, like, sleet.

Teresa: Yeah, it was actually, actually snowing last night.

Travis: It was, uh, upsetting, I would say

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Um, but— so, we're talking about tennis.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: The sport of kings.

Teresa: Indeed.

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I couldn't remember if that was one of 'em. I think there's probably multiple. Is cricket a scor— a sport of kings?

Teresa: I don't know about cricket yet.

Travis: I don't know nothing about cricket. That's true. I don't.

Teresa: It's not quite baseball, and not quite golf?

Travis: I know sticky wicket. I think— I think sticky wicket comes— see, I don't know!

Teresa: I thought sticky wicket came from croquet, which is a game of kings.

Travis: Oh my God. We're gonna have— hey, cancel this episode. We're only talking about sticky wickets.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Sticky wicket also sounds like a baked good you would order, right?

Teresa: It does.

Travis: Like, "Can I get two sticky wickets?"

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "One without nuts?"

Teresa: I mean, it definitely sounds like some sort of cinnamon bun something.

Travis: Yeah, that's what I'm saying, right?

Teresa: Something, yeah. How old do you think the game of tennis is?

Travis: Okay. See, this I know is older than I would think, because I know that, like, it— people used to play it, like, in their castle, like Henry VIII.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Like, played it inside his castle.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Like, I know this. So I'm gonna say... it is... and I know I'm gonna be wrong one way or the other. But I'm gonna say 700 years old.

Teresa: Longer than that.

Travis: Ahh!

Teresa: Uh, there are records of the ancient Greeks and ancient Egyptians playing a similar back-and-forth game, not exactly tennis. Um, Egyptians would use longer, paddle-like objects like a tennis racket, um, where Greeks would kind of be more like handball tennis type deal.

Travis: I know— like, it was one of those things where I was like, "I don't wanna say Egyptian and have it be wrong." But whenever you ask how long something dates back to—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —I always wanna be like, "Egypt! Is it Egypt? Egypt!"

Teresa: I mean, it's probably Egypt.

Travis: It's probably Egypt! It's either Egypt or China, or something like that, but never— like, this week we're talking about cell phones. "Egyptian!" Ugh!

Teresa: But, I mean, you are correct, and it really did reach its kind of, like, fever pitch in the Middle Ages.

Travis: Yeah, okay.

Teresa: Um, the first proper origin of the game is credited to the 12th century French monks, who played a sort of handball version?

Travis: The Monk and Roes.

Teresa: Hmm.

Travis: 'Cause it's like *Mac and Roe*?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Uh, and they referred to this as jeu de paume.

Travis: Jeu de paume.

Teresa: What else is jus de pomme?

Travis: That's apple juice!

Teresa: Yes. [laughs] But if you look at my copy here, you will see that it is spelled completely differently.

Travis: Because that is the way of French.

Teresa: That is the way, yes. They sound exactly the same.

Travis: That is the way of the French language. Where it's like jeu, jus, jeu, jus, jue-lu-lu, lu-lu-lu. It's— and I say that with love. I studied it for a while trying to get the hang of it, and it's just one of things of, like, unless you know, you don't know.

Teresa: Context is key, really, with French. Um, and so that translates to game of the palm, right?

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Game of palm. And that term, the term "tennis" is derived from a mid 14th century old French via the Anglo-Norman term "tenez," which can be translated as hold, or receive, or take it, or here it comes.

So it's thought that you might yell "Tenez!" in the game to indicate—

Travis: Aw, yeah! We should bring that back! Wouldn't that be great?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Imagine your watching, like, a tennis match—

Teresa: To indicate your serve.

Travis: —and the two competitors were just yelling, "Tennis! Tennis! Tennis! Tennis? Tennis!"

Teresa: No, it's— just for—

Travis: [simultaneously] "Tennis!"

Teresa: —just— just for the serve.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: Not all the time. [laughs quietly]

Travis: Okay. But even then—

Teresa: That would be chaos.

Travis: Even then, watching, like— and the best reference I have is, like, Venus and Serena Williams. I don't know any, like— anybody playing now. Who's the new young, like, [stammers] name about town in tennis?

But just someone going, "[quietly] Okay. She's getting ready now. She's s— she's ready to serve."

"Tennis!"

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: [laughs] That's so good to me!

Teresa: Um, and the handball version that we're talking about at the moment, uh, was originally called court tennis, or royal tennis, or quote, "real tennis". Uh, because it was the predecessor to both tennis as we know it, and badminton.

Travis: Now, this was a game literally was played indoors. Um, and, like, around furniture.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Like, it wasn't like there was a special space for it. One, I remember it from *Supersizers Go*, and also it's in *The Great*. They are constantly, like, bouncing a ball against a wall, basically, and two people on either side just, like, in a hallway or, like, in a room, wherever.

Teresa: Well, so, you talk about court tennis, right? And it's not exactly meaning court as in the royal court. Oftentimes, the way that castles were set up, they had a courtyard, right? So tennis could be played in the courtyard, which is basically, like, just the middle of the castle.

Travis: If you've ever seen the, um, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* movie with— I'm trying to remember his name. Um... I can't remember. But, like, the movie version of it, they're playing court tennis.

Teresa: Well, and I think of the movie *Ever After* where Prince Henry is playing tennis and, uh, Marguerite, I believe, finds the ball and somehow ends up in front of the net that they've put up. So, they have spectators, which there definitely were. Like, if anytime, you know, the royals or even the courtiers were playing, people were watching, because it was definitely, you know, a show skill.

Travis: There wasn't TV— oh.

Teresa: There wasn't TV. [laughs] That's true.

Travis: There wasn't a lot else going on.

Teresa: But you would protect the people watching by hanging up very thin curtains or linens or, like, nets so that they didn't get hit with the ball. [laughs quietly]

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Uh, and in this movie, Marguerite appears with a ball in front of the net somehow? It's weird.

Travis: You're right, babe. It doesn't make sense. Cancel *Ever After!*

Teresa: No.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: I love that movie.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, and so the— originally this court tennis wasn't played with rackets proper. It's kind of more like, um, like a catcher's mitt, baseball glove type thing. And it was wildly popular by the 13th century. It had spread across Europe. But the racket wasn't invented until the 16th century. So, ouch, right? This handball people were playing.

Travis: I can't believe I did not remember these three names that starred in the *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* movie. Are you ready?

Teresa: I'm ready.

Travis: Gary Oldman, Tim Roth, Richard Dreyfuss.

Teresa: Yep.

Travis: I couldn't remember any one of those.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Well, you know, there are lots of movies out there. I don't blame you.

Travis: I mean, sure, but okay.

Teresa: Several kings loved the game, like, you mentioned, and they played it frequently from the 16 to the 18th century, and this is where croquet as a lawn game, right? So you could play tennis indoors like you said, this kind of handball thing, around furniture, which seems incredible to me.

Travis: But that's why you can call that real tennis. That's extreme tennis!

Teresa: Extreme.

Travis: Right? Okay, listen.

Teresa: If there is an ultimate tennis, that's what that is. [laughs]

Travis: This is what I'm saying. It's— we've seen it. They did *Floor is Lava*, the TV show. Let's do ultimate tennis. Do it like this. You're playing around furniture, climbing over things? I would watch the heck out of that.

Teresa: I would too.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, and so croquet was kind of the lawn game, right? And tennis quickly surpassed croquet as this kind of outdoor event, similar to croquet.

Travis: Well, I mean, to be fair, if you're talking about spectator sport, right? What's more—[stammers]—I don't wanna knock croquet.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: If you're out there and you love croquet—

Teresa: Get it? "Knock"?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: 'Cause you knock the balls.

Travis: That's your thing. But as far as, like, where's the drama and the heat? Like, tennis, man! Like, to a smaller degree, ping pong.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Get it? That got you.

Teresa: That did get me. Um, speaking of Henry V, um—

Travis: We were? Were we—

Teresa: We—

Travis: —wait, were we speaking of Henry V?

Teresa: Well, the 16th to 18th century. Sorry.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: I was thinking about Henry V. [laughs]

Travis: That should be "*Thinking of Henry V.*"

Teresa: He was, um, one of the people who is credited with being the torchbearer of tennis in England, okay? So, before this it spread across Europe. It was great. The French really loved it.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: English people really got into it after Henry V got into it. And his successor, Henry VIII, was totally into it. I mean, he was a— in his prime, he was a very sportsman-type guy.

Travis: Oh yeah, oh yeah. Then, uh, became a little too indulgent, one might say.

Teresa: Mm-hmm. Uh, he loved— he loved— what's the one with the horses that run at each other?

Travis: Polo?

Teresa: No.

Travis: Jousting.

Teresa: Jousting. He loved jousting.

Travis: I was gonna say, if you're playing polo running the horses at each other, it's bad.

Teresa: [laughs]

Both: You're doing a bad job.

Teresa: Um, and he also apparently loved tennis. Um, and, you know, I don't know how he had time, you know? Trying to split— trying to make the Church of England and getting married 100 times. Um, he was, like, proselytizing how great tennis was.

Travis: "You guys heard about tennis?" Can you imagine living in a world where, like, talking about tennis was, like, the hot thing? Where— that you could be a hipster about, like, "Have you guys heard about this tennis thing? I think you'd really get in— have you— you guys have gotta check out— listen. You're all having fun here with the plague or whatever. But you have to check out tennis."

Teresa: In 1519, a Venetian ambassador said of Henry's tennis game that it was, quote, "The prettiest thing in the world to see him play, his fair skin glowing through the shirt of the finest texture."

Travis: Oooh!

Teresa: Hmmm!

Travis: Okay!

Teresa: Sounds like somebody was sweet on— sweet on Henry.

Travis: Ooh-la-la, yeah. Zut alors.

Teresa: Um, and, you know, I think it's— it's okay to like Henry VIII for his sports prowess but yeah, do remember that he beheaded a ton of people.

Travis: Yeah, babe! Hey, way to draw that line, babe!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I'm gonna say, Henry VIII? Not a great person. I'm goin' out on a limb and I'm saying, he had some flaws!

Teresa: The first tennis court at Hampton Court Palace was built for Cardinal Woolsey between 1526 and 1529, and there are countless stories of tennis games being played by various members of the royal family. Um, in fact it's rumored that King James had over 14 tennis courts.

Travis: You know, I bet— just like applying a little bit of psychology to it, I'm not really that surprised, because just thinking about— once again, comparing it to croquet, right? There's just— listening to that person's description, right? Of Henry playing, there's, like, an exertion to it.

Teresa: Absolutely.

Travis: There's, like, passion to it. And, like, I can see why'd they'd be like, "Ooh, I'm a little flustered!" Right? Because, like, it's— there's a lot of, let's just say it, grunting.

Teresa: Indeed.

Travis: And in— in tennis? Grunting. Everybody's yelling "Tennis" all the time.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: There's a lot going on. It's a very passionate game. And, like, I can see why it would be like, "Ooh, I'm a little—[laughs quietly] huh."

Teresa: Speaking of...

Travis: Ooh?

Teresa: This is bananas. But there are several records of royals dying—

Travis: [gasps]

Teresa: —because of tennis.

Travis: That's... uh, not surprising. [laughs] I can't wait to hear so much more about that. But let's take a quick break ourselves so we don't get overexerted... and write a thank you note to our sponsors.

Teresa: Let's go.

[theme music plays]

Travis: Teresa, let's pretend— I'm gonna pretend like you don't know this. I'm gonna tell you about Bombas.

Teresa: Alright. I know a little bit about it, and I think of the best fitting, most comfiest socks ever.

Travis: Okay, well, you seems to know a little bit more than you were letting on.

Teresa: I can't lie, I wear Bombas socks.

Travis: Then why did you tell me you don't know anything about Bombas?

Teresa: I didn't say that! You said pretend I don't know anything about Bombas.

Travis: Why would you lie to me about our sponsor.

Teresa: Tell us about our sponsor!

Travis: Okay. Bombas's mission is simple: make the most comfortable clothes ever, and match every item sold with an equal item donated. So when you buy Bombas, you are also giving to someone in need, Teresa.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Did you know that?

Teresa: I did know that.

Travis: Aw, man! Okay. Well, what about this? Did you know that everything they make is soft, seamless, tableless, and has a luxury, cozy feel?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Okay. Well, did you know that science has shown that wearing Bombas socks will make you live 20 years longer?

Teresa: [through laughter] No.

Travis: 'Cause I made that up.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Bombas t-shirts are made with thoughtful design features like invisible seams, soft fabrics, and the perfect weight, so they hang just right. Bombas underwear has a barely-there feel with second skin support that might make you forget they're even there. In a good way! And, did you know that socks, underwear, and t-shirts are the three most requested clothing items at a homeless shelter? That's why Bombas donates one for every item you buy. So, go to bombas.com/shmanners and get 20% off your first purchase. That's bombas.com/shmanners for 20% off. [Bombas.com/shmanners](https://bombas.com/shmanners).

[music plays]

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Speaker Six: Oh, my stars. [laughs]

Speaker Seven: I'm so— I'm so excited to meet you!

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[music plays]

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[music and ad end]

Travis: Okay. So, who died? What now? Hey, what? Tennis has a body count. Go on.

Teresa: Let's start with Louis—

Travis: Start with?! There's more than one?

Teresa: Start— I know. Louis X of France.

Travis: Uh-huh?

Teresa: Um, June 1316, he played a very heated game and reportedly became extremely dehydrated. He quickly panted off to the side and chugged a giant urn of chilled wine.

Travis: Uh-huh, cool.

Teresa: Do you think that helped? [laughs]

Travis: No— well...

Teresa: The answer is no. He died shortly after. [wheezes]

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, and here's the thing. This particular casualty of tennis was 26 years old, had no male heirs. So, uh, when his brothers didn't either, the Capetian dynasty ended, and created conditions that would eventually lead to the 100 years war.

Travis: Whoa! What? Hold on. So to sum it up, tennis killed the king... and caused a war.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Okay, great! Cool, cool, cool.

Teresa: Um, in—

Travis: Now, to be fair, perhaps not having clean water to drink...

Teresa: That probably had a lot to do with it as well.

Travis: ... might have done it more than te— tennis is like, "Hey, hey, man. I didn't— I didn't make him do it."

Teresa: Uh, 1437, um, King James I of Scotland, who had a rather large physique, um, played to game to reportedly keep his weight in check. Um, and he would fly through a rage when—

Travis: I thought you were gonna say, like, a window.

Teresa: [laughs] No. Fly into a rage is the correct expression.

Travis: Still, I would've thought you were gonna say window.

Teresa: When the balls that he played with would often run into the sewer. But, you know, he's the king so he said, like, "What is that sewer drain doing there? Cover it up. Get rid of it. I keep losing my tennis balls." Right?

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: Three days after he had the sewers sealed up in this particular tennis court, a group of assassins made their way into his bedroom, and he heard them approach. He lifted a particular floorboard just for this occasion and plunged into the sewer to make an escape, except...

Travis: [gasps] They were sealed!

Teresa: ... the one that was in his escape route was the tennis court, so it was sealed and they caught up to him.

Travis: Ahh! What?! Hoisted on your own petard.

Teresa: I mean, the irony. Whoaaa, the irony.

Travis: Yeah. Isn't it ironic.

Teresa: Indeed. Half a century later, King Charles VIII would also die because of the game.

Travis: Was it in Roman numerals?

Teresa: It was.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: But I did it—I—

Travis: You nailed it.

Teresa: I nailed it. I always do that!

Travis: Listen, it's tough!

Teresa: I know, I know them. But something about getting in front of a microphone makes me feel like I don't know them, but I do.

Travis: This is me every time I try to spell the word restaurant. There's only so many places you can go, and yet I get it wrong every time! I don't know what's happening.

Teresa: Um, so he had a highly anticipated game of tennis that was playing in his castle, but not— he wasn't playing it, right? Um, and it was at the other end of the castle.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, he took his queen by the hand and rushed through the house... the castle. [laughs]

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And, um, there was a particular, like, section that had been very poorly maintained, so they were going to play at the castle ditch, which was, like, the nastiest place in the castle. Um, it had a broken—

Travis: That was poor planning, wasn't it?

Teresa: I know, right?

Travis: Don't play there! Play somewhere— play at, like, the castle candy farm or something. What are you doing?

Teresa: Uh, it had kind of a broken down, rocky entrance, and everybody [clears throat] committed a nuisance at the entrance. That's where they peed. They peed on these walls.

Travis: Don't do it there! Don't play tennis there!

Teresa: And he knocked his head on the entrance as he ran in. Hours later he collapsed and died.

Travis: That's why I've always said: never tennis where you pee. Right?

Teresa: You have never, never said that.

Travis: Well, but if I was going to, that's what I would say.

Teresa: That is what you would say.

Travis: Yeah. If someone was like— let me put it this way. If someone was like, "Should I tennis where I pee?"

I'd be like, "No!"

Teresa: No.

Travis: History shows us— hey, if you don't learn from history, you're doomed to repeat it, young one! Do not tennis where you pee! Now I've said it, like, four times.

Teresa: Alright. In 1715—

Travis: It's goin' on merch now! Don't tennis where you pee: *Shmanners*. If there's one thing we want you to learn from this show— hey, everybody. We've done over, what, like, 200, 300 episodes? If there's one thing that I want you learn, it's not about, like, where handkerchiefs come from, or what's the deal with— it's [emphatically] don't tennis where pee. [through gritted teeth] Lives depend on it!

Teresa: Oh— alright. Okay. Uh, in 1715... [laughs quietly]

Travis: Yeah?

Teresa: King George II's son, Frederick, who was the Prince of Wales, died of a lung abscess because doctors were pretty sure that it was from a tennis ball that struck him in the chest.

Travis: Whoa! Tennis is dangerous!

Teresa: Here's the last one we've got. Um, Anne Boleyn.

Travis: I've heard of her, yeah.

Teresa: Well—

Travis: She died when Henry VIII lost a tennis game. He got real mad.

Teresa: No. I mean... she was definitely beheaded at the Tower of London. But she was—

Travis: 'Cause she slipped on a tennis ball and landed on an ax.

Teresa: No.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: She was caught at a tennis game. Not— that wasn't what made her go to the Tower. It was— she had to be arrested first. They had to catch her first, right? She was watching a tennis match in 1536 when she received her orders to present herself to the Privy Council. Um, and it was said [laughs quietly] that she complained when she was told to leave the match, saying it was unfair that she didn't get to collect her winnings.

Travis: That's true.

Teresa: Because you would bet on the tennis match as well.

Travis: I thought it was gonna be like, it's unfair that I don't get to finish the game, right? Like, let me watch the end of it, then I'll— yeah, then I'm out. You got it.

Teresa: And then, as irony would have it, the King did not attend her beheading because he was playing tennis. [laughs quietly]

Travis: Oh. Hmm. That's a dig right there.

Teresa: Yeah. Alright, moving on.

Travis: 'Cause you know he's the king. He could be like, "Let's reschedule this game."

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Right? It wasn't like, "[hisses] Ohh, no, I'd love to be there! But I c— I have this match! Aww."

Teresa: I think he didn't want to be there.

Travis: Yeah, probably.

Teresa: Alright. 1874 is when the first tennis courts made their way to the United States.

Travis: Hmm.

Teresa: And three years later, in 1877, the All England Club in London hosted one of its very first tennis tournaments. Can you imagine what this tennis tournament is called?

Travis: Wimbledon!

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: It was originally a croquet club. Um, but—

Travis: What? And tennis literally, like, overtook it.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: [gasps] Yeah.

Teresa: Uh, the inaugural championship was held on July 9th, 1877. And the only event was gentlemens' singles.

Travis: Do you think— there must've been, right? At least one person sitting in the crowd for that thing, like— and while everyone else is, like, cheering, one person's like, "[sullenly] It's not as good as croquet."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "[dejected] I miss croquet. Do you guys remember when we used to only do croquet here? That was better. Aww."

Teresa: Um, there were, um, 22 people who paid a guinea each to enter the tournament. Um, and it was scheduled over five days, but it rained a lot— duh, as it does in England. So it ended up taking about ten days.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: Um, and Spencer Gore took home the title. He won a silver cup and 12 guineas of prize money.

Travis: Huh! Okay.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Pretty good.

Teresa: Uh, and—

Travis: I don't know. Is it— is that a lot?

Teresa: That— that seems fine.

Travis: Okay. I'd want the cup, but... from what I've seen of Knight's Tale I'd probably win the cup and then sell it off. Do people still do that? [laughs] I— they probably don't do that now. Like, win an Oscar like, "Oh, thank God. Yes, I'll trade you this Oscar for two ducks, please." That's probably not happening.

Teresa: [laughs] In, uh—

Travis: Although, you know, if it was me, I'd rather have two live ducks hanging out than an Oscar, now.

Teresa: Yeah?

Travis: I'd like to win the Oscar, be able to say I won it. No, I take that back. I—

Teresa: I've heard that a lot of people keep their Oscars in the toilet, in the water closet.

Travis: What?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Well, maybe Tom Hanks does, 'cause he got so many.

Teresa: Maybe.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: I think I read that Rosamund Pike buries hers in her garden.

Travis: What?!

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Okay. I'll take it.

Teresa: You get to do what you want.

Travis: Rosamund, I know you're listening.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Can you send me... send me your Oscar. I'll hold on to it for you.

Teresa: She'd have to dig it up first.

Travis: I'll come get it.

Teresa: Um, so 1882, the tournament was so popular that the All England Club dropped the word croquet from their branding and, uh, it was restored for sentimental reasons in 1899, but no one thinks about croquet when they think about Wimbledon anymore, right?

Travis: Well, there's one person.

Teresa: You think— just that one guy?

Travis: "[dejected] Used to be about croquet."

Teresa: By 1884 they added ladies' singles and gentlemen doubles, and 1913 they added ladies' doubles and mixed doubles.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Also, the first Black player to compete in Wimbledon was Bertrand Milbourne Clark, an amateur player from Jamaica, in 1924. Maybe we should do an episode on them someday.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Okay. So, the popularity of Wimbledon gave rise to four other tournaments that we know about today—

Travis: Thimbledon. Pimbledon. Jimbledon and Dimbledon.

Teresa: The US Open.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: The French Open, uh, and the Australian Open. These are known as the four majors, or the grand slam tournaments.

Travis: Do you think when those other three were established Wimbledon was like, "We should've been the Wimbledon Open. Oh, man."

Teresa: Eh, maybe. I don't know. Um, one of the most famous tennis matches of all time took place in 1973. This was the year that the US Open made history by offering equal prize money to men and women, and this is the Billie Jean King versus Bobby Riggs. Uh, there's a great movie about that. Uh, this was referred to in the media as the Battle of the Sexes.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: She won. She stomped him.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Uh, defeating him on the court September 20th, 1973. You mentioned Venus and Serena Williams.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Um, and there's another movie that actually just came out— was it last season, Richard?

Travis: I don't know what time is anymore.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: I don't know when anything was.

Teresa: Um, but there's— you know, there's a great documentary, a 2012 documentary, *Venus & Serena*, which goes into a lot of detail about their love of tennis and their love of each other. It's a great movie.

Travis: Beautiful. You know, I've always said that me and Justin and Griffin are like the Venus and Serena Williams of podcasting.

Teresa: Oh, you have?

Travis: Well, we're siblings, and we're— well, I guess we're not— I don't think we're as good at podcasting as they are at tennis. I take it back. We're not the Venus and the Serena Williams of podcasting.

Teresa: No. You're not. Um, so the game itself continues to evolve, you know, giving us new brilliant athletes every decade.

Travis: Wait, people are still playing it now?

Teresa: They absolutely are.

Travis: Whoa!

Teresa: Um, so the winner of 18 Grand Slam singles titles—

Travis: Is me.

Teresa: —uh, Martina—

Travis: Navratilova.

Teresa: Yes. Great job!

Travis: Thank you.

Teresa: You do know tennis people!

Travis: Yeah! [laughs]

Teresa: You said at the beginning that you couldn't name anybody but Venus and Serena.

Travis: No, from now— but, like, yeah. And then there's, like, Pete Sampras and John McEnroe. Like, I know tennis people. I don't know who's playing tennis right now. Like, all of my references— mostly sports references stop, like, a decade ago.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And I don't know why.

Teresa: Well, she said simply, "Tennis has given me a soul."

Travis: That's beautiful.

Teresa: Yeah, it is beautiful. Okay, so, let's talk about the actual game. Tennis basics. Tennis courts are divided by lines and squares and rectangles and such, right?

Travis: Very geometric.

Teresa: So, one side of the net is your side, one is the opponent's, whether you're playing singles or doubles. Singles have a slightly smaller court, so there's a line inside the outside line. That's the smaller court.

Travis: Now, this is— let me just say, we rarely, like, cover something like this. So let me just say, if you're trying to follow this, you need to look at a picture.

Teresa: [laughs] Yes.

Travis: 'Cause otherwise things like the inside, the outside line, is gonna melt your brain. So, like, look at a picture of it as we're describing it.

Teresa: The parallel line, okay? Furthest from the net is the base line. And then there's a thinner line between the base line and the net. That's the service line, okay?

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: You'll aim your serves in the area between the net and the service line. There's a small line in the middle of the base line, and that's the center mark, and you'll stand either the left or the right to make your serve.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: The service area is divided into vertical halves, which are perpendicular to the net, and it divides it into left and right sections. Two lines on each side, uh, set the boundaries of the court. And, like I said, the inner line is for singles and the outer is for doubles. So that started kind of at the middle of the net and then built outwards.

Travis: Uh, in high school I took a class called individual duel sports, and it included tennis and golf and archery and bowling, um, and— and stuff like that. And I always referred to it as theater kid sports, you know?

Teresa: Oh, nice.

Travis: Sports for theater— because the other options were like, "Do you guys wanna take the class that teaches you, like, football and basketball?"

And it's like, "[through laughter] No, no, no."

Teresa: Absolutely not.

Travis: Individual duel sports, please.

Teresa: Um, I did summer gym. We had an offering for summer gym, and in the morning when it was cool enough, we would just run and run and run and run.

Travis: Oh, gross.

Teresa: And then—

Travis: What's that teaching you except that this sucks?

Teresa: [laughs] Um, and then as it got closer, 'cause we got out just before— did we have lunch? No, I don't think we had lunch. I think it was from, like, 8 AM to 12. So, like, as it got closer to noon we would do our different sports, and I remember having a badminton course, uh, not tennis, but it's similar. And we had bowling, and we had a swimming course, and... did we have archery? I don't think so. I think it was just those three. No, and, uh, country line dancing.
[laughs]

Travis: Yeah. Yeah, there we go. Okay.

Teresa: I don't know if that's just a Midwestern thing, but...

Travis: Yeah it is.

Teresa: That's what we did.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Okay. So, here's the scoring basics.

Travis: Starts with love.

Teresa: Yes. 0, a score of zero is called love. Hey, do you know one of the reasons maybe why it's called love?

Travis: I'm trying to remember, 'cause I know that— 'cause I think it sounds like oeuf? Which is—

Teresa: Loov. L'oeuf.

Travis: I thought it was oeuf, like egg.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: But you don't just say— in French, you just don't say the word.

Travis: You say l'oeuf. The egg, right?

Teresa: You say l'oeuf, the egg. It always has a qualifier.

Travis: Looks like an egg, 'cause it's a zero, right?

Teresa: Right, yes. And then that sounds like love.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Good job!

Travis: I took the class, babe! I got an A in individual duel sports, babe!

Teresa: Okay. So, player 1 serves the ball, and from the time the ball is served, one point is available to either player. The point is awarded when the ball goes out of bounds, or hits the net, or is missed.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: The game ends after one player has scored four points with a margin of at least two points over the other player. For example, a score of 4-2 means that the game is over, but a score of 4-3 means the game must continue.

Travis: And it's not score— it's like, 15—

Teresa: Right, yes. The first score is called 15. The second is 30. The third is called 40. Which...

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: ... doesn't make a ton of sense to me.

Travis: Listen, to be fair, if you look at football, football's like, "A touchdown is six, and then you get one point for kicking it. But if you kick it from here, it's three points! But if you run it from here, it's two points."

And it's like, one, two, three, four. Basketball's the only one where it's just like, this one's one. This one's two. That one's three. That's it!

Teresa: That's it.

Travis: You can either score one point, two points, or three points. Baseball is just like, one point for everyone. Everyone can score one point at a time. One point per person.

Teresa: Mm-hmm. And then serve points are awarded to the player who doesn't let the ball hit the net, bounce twice, or go out of bounds.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Um, and breaking the serve occurs when the player who didn't serve wins that single game, because it's divided into games, sets, and matches.

Travis: There's a lot going on.

Teresa: Phew, there's a lot. And if—

Travis: There's a reason it's the sport of kings.

Teresa: Indeed. So, uh, sets consist of six games, and the set doesn't end until one player wins six games or has a margin of two wins over the opponent.

Travis: Sh— okay.

Teresa: And then, uh, for example— okay. So, if one player has won six games and the other has won five, they have to keep playing until the winner has two more wins.

Travis: Okay. So you have to win six games by a margin of two.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Or play until you have a margin of two, over six games. Okay, got it.

Teresa: Correct. And each one of these— so then you have the sets, and the whole thing is called the match.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Alright. On to some etiquette.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Because the game of kings certainly has a lot of etiquette.

Travis: You gotta grunt. You gotta yell tennis. Don't tennis where you pee. Those are the three main rules.

Teresa: [wheezes]

Travis: They'll teach you that at tennis school.

Teresa: So the first etiquette that we need to go over is line calling, because it's important that the ball remain within the lines, right? Um, you call the ball on your side of the net, so you can't say to the other side of the net, "Oh, that ball was in." That's not your place to say.

Travis: That's why there's a line judge who sits right there at the side.

Teresa: I mean, yes, but for friendly games you don't usually have a third person line judging.

Travis: Oh, sure, okay.

Teresa: Um, and then if you saw the ball go out, your opponent must accept your call. So if you're— if they hit it to you and it's out, you have— you say on your side that it went out, and they have to accept it.

Travis: That makes sense. I mean, as frustrating is that is— but it's a game, right? Like Bebe says, everybody wins a little bit. Um, your— they— you just have to trust, like, they had a better perspective on it, 'cause they were there, right? Where it's across the net from you. And if you think that that person is lying or cheating, just don't play with them anymore after that.

Teresa: But you do get a chance, okay? Because if you're unsure, the ball is supposed to be called in, okay? You can't call it out unless you're certain, so you can challenge your opponent just by asking, "Are you certain? Are you sure?"

And if they are not sure, you can have the point. If you're not sure, it has to be in, you know what I mean?

Travis: Okay. And if you can answer three riddles...

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: ... then you can cross the net—

Teresa: Also, it relies a lot on this idea of sportsmanship, right?

Travis: Sure, sure, sure.

Teresa: And you do get the one— it's not exactly a challenge, but it is kind of like a little dance that you do around the tennis court where you say, "Are you sure it was in?" Where you give your opponent the chance to either say, "Absolutely, it was out," or "I'm not certain, so you can have the point."

Travis: And if you hear 'em go "Well... " and you're like, "Ah ha ha! [laughs] J'accuse!"

Teresa: [laughs] J'accuse.

Travis: But, I mean, there is a reason, folks, why someone losing their temper in a tennis match is, like, major news.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Right? Because, like, I don't know, how many times a game in, like, baseball is a baseball player mad about a call or whatever, right? Or, like, a basketball player gets in somebody face, or hockey, right? It happens. But someone losing their temper in tennis is, like, front page.

Teresa: Okay. So, when the ball is in play, any balls on your side of the net are your responsibility, and if you're receiving, it's your job to make sure they're returned to the server, because again we're talking about friendly games, not like, professional matches where, like, you have—

Travis: There's no ball kid.

Teresa: —a ball person. Uh, and if a ball lands in a neighboring court, you have to wait for an appropriate time in the matches to retrieve it. You can't just— that makes complete sense, because why would you just run on to a tennis court to retrieve your ball when people are playing tennis?

Travis: 'Cause if you can do some flips and, like, jump over the ball to grab your— and also you have to walk in doing the Midwestern hands up "[quietly] Sorry, sorry! Ooh, sorry! 'Scuse me! Ooh, [stammers] if I can just— oop! Thank you!"

Teresa: Okay. It's the server's responsibility to announce the score at the beginning of each point, and if your opponent disagrees, try to— you have to track back the points where, like, "Okay, so I— I got this one, but before that you had that one." And you have to go back to the score that you last agree on. So if there's a tussle, as opposed to "No, I have— I have 40 and you have 30."

But then you're like, "No, that's not— that's not it, because you only have 15."

They're like, "No, no."

You have to go back and play it to the point where you're like, "Okay. The last time we agree is that we each had 15."

Travis: Okay. That makes sense.

Teresa: Right?

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Okay. Uh, this is something that I was— I was very interested to learn. Okay, tennis is a very, like, adrenaline fueled game, and—

Travis: Yeah, exertion. You might die from it.

Teresa: —no one expects you to play it in silence, which is why we often associate tennis with, like, the exertion and, like, grunting and such.

Travis: Grunting and yelling tennis.

Teresa: Um, but... uh, you should keep your shouting and screaming to a minimum, because... you are responsible for not interrupting the other— like, the other players. So, like, usually tennis courts have three or four tennis courts in, like, an area, right? You're responsible for not interrupting the other games going on.

Travis: Yeah, and I think you're also expected to do, like, grunts and singular noises and not, like, full blown sentences like, "Aw, here it comes! Yeah, let's do it!"

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "This is how you sport!" Right? Like that kind of thing I think you're not allowed to do.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Or like, "Look at me now! I'm the best at this!"

Teresa: Yes. Uh, because interrupting their match is— is, you know— I mean, it's not cool. If you're playing a game, you wouldn't want people to yell and upset your match either. Um, and so—

Travis: That's true if you're sitting in the audi— uh, audience. If you're in the crowd as well.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: It is a very, uh—once they start playing, much like golf, right? You can, like, gasp and stuff, and that kind of happens, but it's not a like a cheering and jeering kind of thing, right?

Teresa: Right. At big matches it is okay to cheer and clap when the players enter the court, but once the game has begun, that's not really something that people do. And also— so, if you're playing in your neighborhood and you have, like, a tennis area that has three or four courts, it's considered impolite to ask when a game will be finished, but you can ask the score.

Travis: Hmm, there you go.

Teresa: Right? So you wouldn't say, "Ugh, you've been playing forever. When are you gonna be done?"

Instead you would wait, you know, for a lull, you know, where they're resting or drinking water or whatever, and you can ask the score, and that's kind of like the covert message of, "Hey, I'm waiting."

Travis: "[whiny posh voice] Excuse me fellow sportsperson! What is your score? It's just that I have, uh, but— but an hour of break."

Teresa: No, don't— you can't say that.

Travis: "[whiny posh voice] No, of course not! I would not— it's that I've come here to practice—"

Teresa: No, you can't say that either.

Travis: "[whiny posh voice] No, no, of course! I just wanted to know the score!"

Teresa: Only the score.

Travis: "[whiny posh voice] 'Cause I'm betting on your game."

Teresa: [laughs] Only the score.

Travis: "[whiny posh voice] My squire, Tuppence, and I, have a bit of a gentleman's wager."

Teresa: Alright. That'll do it.

Travis: Oh, so that's gonna do it for us. Thank you so much for joining us. We have to thank Alex, our researcher, without whom we wouldn't be able to do this show. Thank you Rachel, our editor, without whom we wouldn't be able to do this show. Thank you Max Fun, our podcast home.

Teresa: And thank you listeners! With your su—

Travis: We could do this show without you, but why?

Teresa: [laughs] But why. With your support, we enjoy doing the show.

Travis: Without their support we'd hate doing this show? Is that what you're saying? Okay.

Teresa: I'm not saying that. What I'm saying is it makes it even more enjoyable.

Travis: Okay, great. Um, go check out all the other amazing McElroy podcasts at mcelroy.family. I usually say Maximum Fun shows there, so it feels weird to be like, "Check out the *amazing* McElroy—" Check out all the other amazing shows on Maximumfun.org, and if you're interested in seeing the rest of the McElroy projects, you can go to mcelroy.family. Check out mcelroymerch.com to see all the merchandise that we have there. Um, 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. Thank you to Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art, @shmannerscast. Keep an eye on that Twitter, 'cause as Max Fun Drive approaches, we're gonna be ramping it up and giving thanks and shoutouts to people. Um, also 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 from other fans, join that group today.

And, we are always, always looking forward to submissions for topics and idioms. I love doing those idioms shows.

Travis: Aw yeah.

Teresa: If you would please send those in to shmatterscast@gmail.com, say hello to Alex. She reads every single email.

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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