

Shmanners 383: Dog Shows

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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: How are you?

Teresa: As well as can be expected.

Travis: I don't know what that means.

Teresa: So here's the thing, right?

Travis: Expect— Who expects anything these days?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: In this economy?

Teresa: It's gonna be Thanksgiving. It is, it feels like the holidays, they just start coming and they don't stop coming.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Things to do, people to see, places to go.

Travis: Things to buy.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: You know, it's all just one big dog and pony show.

Teresa: Oh! Aww!

Travis: Aww! Uh, 'cause this episode is about dog shows, not a pony show, there's no ponies. I think a dog and pony show is actually like a circus, or like a, uh... I don't know, it's not what we're talking about.

Teresa: No, I think you're right. I think a dog and pony show is a circus.

Travis: Yeah. You know, something they used to do like in a ring, from town to town, not necessarily, I think, what we're talking about.

Teresa: Yes, which is dog shows.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Yes. And there is a very famous dog show that will show on TV after the parade on Thanksgiving Day.

Travis: Yeah. The Westminster Abbey dog show. No, the Westminster Dog Show, and then the Eastminster dog show, and then the Northminster dog show...

Teresa: No, no, no...

Travis: ... and when the Southminster dog show is complete, then will the winds of the world swirl the dogs into one giant tornado.

Teresa: Oh no, please don't.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: I don't— I'm not sure if I've ever actually, like, watched it—watched it?

Travis: Really?

Teresa: But I know that when we— I've watched the parade and then I've left the television on, so as to have the dog show in the room.

Travis: I am angry at myself.

Teresa: Oh, yeah?

Travis: That we have been together now, I think almost 14 years. And in that time. I've never made you like watch a dog show.

Teresa: Listen, seven of those years, I have been watching children instead of dog show.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: On Thanksgiving.

Travis: Okay, but don't make it sound like kids wouldn't also watch the dog show. And at this point, I'm saying there was time in there, there would have been time that I could have shown you a dog show.

I would have watched— If I had known, I would have said, "I will stop cooking and I will watch the children for an hour while everything gets cold and goes gross so that you can watch a dog show." It matters that much to me.

Teresa: I don't want to, I don't want to.

Travis: Did you miss the last part of that sentence? It matters that much to me. Dog shows are incredible.

Teresa: I guess—

Travis: I care more about the Westminster Dog Show than I do the Super Bowl. Now admittedly, I don't care that much about the Westminster Dog Show. I just don't care that much about the Super Bowl.

Teresa: You know what I really like? The Puppy Bowl.

Travis: Yeah, Puppy Bowl rules.

Teresa: That's what I really like. And I think that is the perfect marrying of those two things.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And then I would like a dog parade.

Travis: I would love a dog parade, are you kidding me?

Teresa: A dog only parade.

Travis: A dog fashion show, a dog parade, a dog congress, whatever we can get.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I'll take it.

Teresa: This silliness I think has gone a little too far.

Travis: Okay, tell me about the history of dog shows.

Teresa: Okay, here's a brief description of what this event entails. So this is an event where dogs are exhibited and judged. They can earn points for a number of things, but are most often judged on temperament, obedience, and structure in accordance to the set standards for their breed. Depending upon who is putting on the dog show, there may be different set standards.

Travis: I'm gonna pause everything right now real quick to make clear that as we talk about dog shows and we talk about how much I enjoy them, that is not me endorsing anything related to the breeding of purebred dogs.

There are plenty of dogs who the nature of the purebred breed has health complications to it, has things that are not comfortable for the dog. There's been plenty of examples of, like, breeding in dogs that have made the dog's lives not as comfortable and stuff like that, and also plenty of puppy mill issues when it comes to, like, pure breeding and selling purebred dogs, and both of our dogs are rescues.

Fully acknowledge that. Just wanna make that clear, I just like dog shows, that doesn't mean I love like the purebred kind of focus of it.

Teresa: Word. On occasion, these standards are revised, right? To make the dogs more robust, either health-wise or, you know, lead. better lives, and so if that's something that you're interested in, the American Kennel Club specifically has a really great website detailing a lot of this stuff. Which is the Kennel Club that hosts the Post Macy's Day Parade Show.

Travis: The AKC.

Teresa: Yes. Different breeds of dogs are judged, males and females separately, although the dogs are not to be spayed or neutered because they are to potentially breed the next generation of beautiful dogs, right?

In one competition, the dog's size, proportions, bone structure, teeth, coat, musculature, movements are all evaluated against this, again, standard that is set by them. And then the best male dog competes against the best female for the best in breed.

And then the best in breed winners then compete against other breeds in their group like large dog, right? That's a group of dogs.

Travis: Huge dog. Big red dogs.

Teresa: And then finally, the group winners compete for Best in Show.

Travis: So I just looked it up because I remember an announcement I had to see what it is. This year, the AKC did announce, or rather Westminster Dog Show did, that for the first time, mixed breed dogs will be participating in the agility competition...

Teresa: Cool.

Travis: ... but they will not be eligible for Best in Show. So, not all the way, but there will be mixed breed dog representation at the dog show.

Teresa: Nice. We've been parading these pooches for more than 150 years.

Travis: Ooh, yeah, the Westminster Dog Show, just saw it pop up, it was like 183 years or some such.

Teresa: The first modern dog show—

Travis: 138, 138. I switched it.

Teresa: Yeah, 138. The first modern, you keep saying Westminster.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Do you mean AKC?

Travis: Well, the Westminster Dog Show is, I think, the big one. Hold on, have I been making this up this whole time? Westminster is a big dog show, for all sorts of dogs, not just big dogs. [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Westminster dog show. The Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show. Yes, I am talking about different ones.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: So the Westminster dog show is in May.

Teresa: Yes, and the AKC is the one on Thanksgiving.

Travis: Correct.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: That is what I thought. Okay. So the first modern dog show was held in Newcastle upon Tyne in June of 1859.

Travis: Wow.

Teresa: Interestingly though, dogs were kind of the side act because this was supposed to be a cattle show. And if you know the Brits and their beef, they're big into it, right?

Travis: Yeah, they love it. Listen to Beef and Dairy Network.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: They're wild about this stuff.

Teresa: There's a whole beef eater society, right? And, um, people were eager to register their fur babies, but it was more of a rural community. So it was mostly sporting breeds, right, that were useful for farming. So like setters and pointers.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Um, farming and hunting. And so, you know, they were awarded firearms as prizes, because again, a very rural community.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: But like, you know, this is a pretty humble beginning for what would later become the dog show circuit. And the first show, later, to include

non-sporting breeds was held in Birmingham later in the year. The event was such a wild success that the Birmingham Dog Show Society was formed and created the first national dog show.

Travis: Ooh.

Teresa: Which was...

Travis: For national dogs.

Teresa: Massively popular.

Travis: Yeah, I can imagine. Dogs are cool.

Teresa: 267 entries, 30 breeds, 42 classes.

Travis: Only one champion.

Teresa: [laughs] Yes? I'm not quite— I mean one best in show, right?

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: That's a champion.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: The organizer of the event was Richard Brailsford. He was a gamekeeper of the estate that belonged to the Earl of Derby.

Travis: Oh, of course.

Teresa: He submitted his own dog, the Earl did, a pointer named Juno in 1862, where she won a first prize.

Travis: Mm. Huh, a little convenient, don't you think?

Teresa: Uh...

Travis: That the Gamekeeper for the Earl started the event and the Earl's dog won it? A little sus.

Teresa: Anyway...

Travis: I'm reopening this investigation.

Teresa: [laughs] From that point on, dog shows spread rapidly throughout the English aristocracy. Um, and you know. those are the people who made dog breeding fashionable and respectable as a hobby. Whereas before it was kind of just necessity, right?

Travis: And not only that, I mean, really just, it doesn't take much to see like, as obsessed as they are about purebred in dogs and horses and stuff, and in the aristocracy itself...

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: ...that then you're like, okay, so we've all got purebred dogs. How do I prove that my purebred dog is better than your purebred dog? We'll have them compete. So that I can have a trophy that says, my dog is a better version of this dog than yours.

Teresa: [laughs] So by the end of the 1860s, the National Dog Show boasted over 700 dogs and 20,000 paying visitors.

Travis: Wow.

Teresa: So it was, you know, a hobby on the rise, right?

Travis: And for some to become, I guess, a business. I mean, we're talking about a circuit, right?

Teresa: Absolutely a business. Right. Um, it was kind of like... people who do chili at the State Fair.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Right? Very, very popular within those circles of people.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: But it is very quickly, I mean, chili at the State Fair is great, but dog shows have become like a spectator sport.

Travis: Well, even the chili at the State Fair, there are people who are like, and then I dig into this one, and then this one, and this one, and I'm competing for prizes, and hopefully wanting to sell my recipe, or get sponsored by people and stuff like that.

Teresa: Right. At the time, the fanciest way to become fancy was to show your dog in London.

Travis: Oh, yeah. Even now sometimes, if I could, I'd fly Buttercup over there and just stand in the middle of the street and hold her up. "Look at this! Look at this dog, everybody! Notice me!"

Teresa: 1862, the very first show in London held at the Agricultural Hall in... Eye-lington? Is-lington?

Travis: Is-lington.

Teresa: Islington. And so then the next year, they moved out to the Cremorne Gardens in Chelsea, and boasted as many as 100,000 visitors at that one.

Travis: Wow.

Teresa: Bigger venue, more spectators, right?

Travis: That's a lot of people.

Teresa: And then that same year, Paris hosted their first dog show, and it became so popular that the Prince of Wales attended.

Travis: That guy?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: He came out of the ocean and said, "I'll leave all my whale subjects behind. I must see this." Do you get it?

Teresa: So— Yeah, I do. I do. The elite, at these events, the not only elite people, but elite dogs, began to feel like there should be certain standards upheld. It was wildly subjective at this point, right? You know, quality and qualification in one town...

Travis: Were they owned by an earl?

Teresa: Sure. Might not even be discussed at the next show, right? So there was no standard at this time. And so a British politician named C. Wallace Evelyn Shirley.

Travis: Which of that was a first and last—? What's hyphenated in there? How much—?

Teresa: There's no hyphens, three first names, I guess.

Travis: I don't know where the names begin or end.

Teresa: I don't know either.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Those Brits in 1873. Um, organized and founded the Kennel Club in London in April of 1873. The hope, obviously, was to bring standards to dog shows so that everyone could be working off of the same kind of, like, rubric.

Travis: And you don't mean standards like, who we let in or whatever, but rather of like, judgment guide, right?

Teresa: Right, yes.

Travis: Of like, you're looking for this, you're looking for this, you're looking for this.

Teresa: Exactly, exactly.

Travis: I mean, I'm sure there was a lot of the who do we let in stuff too, but.

Teresa: Um, and so the Kennel Club's first organized show was at the Crystal Palace in 1873, which became one of their preferred venues, along with a second show at the Alexandra Palace.

And so these shows became enormous affairs requiring professional organizations to handle guests and dogs and the general hectic nature of getting these kind of events running. And this is where Charles Cruft enters the stage.

Travis: Charles McGruff?

Teresa: No, Charles Cruft...

Travis: The crime dog.

Teresa: ... fell into this position. He's not a dog. He's a person.

Travis: Hey. You could see where I might get confused.

Teresa: McGruff the crime dog is an anthropomorphic dog even. It's not really—

Travis: So you wouldn't let him compete? Oh!

Teresa: No, I wouldn't.

Travis: Sounds like somebody's got a little chip on her shoulder.

Teresa: He's a human-sized dog.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Proportioned.

Travis: Uh-huh. So he's not allowed in your fancy dog show?

Teresa: Nope.

Travis: Oh, okay. Uh...

Teresa: Anyway. [laughs]

Travis: [imitating McGruff] That feels like a crime!

Teresa: He, uh...

Travis: Because he would be upset about it.

Teresa: Yeah, he would.

Travis: And he can talk.

Teresa: Oh yeah, you're right. He would be upset.

Travis: [imitating McGruff] I'm gonna investigate this.

Teresa: I don't know if I've ever heard him speak.

Travis: That's how McGruff talks. Take a bite out of crime.

Teresa: Okay, I believe you.

Travis: Now we're gonna look it— After this, I'm showing you so many videos.

Teresa: [laughs] He started out as a purveyor of dog biscuits to aristocratic owners, and then saw potential far beyond hawking dog treats. Um, he had lots of connections with these fancy people and began rubbing elbows with specialist breed clubs and used his connections to organize his first show in Paris as part of l'Exposition Universelle de 1878. I don't know how to say all those letters and numbers in French.

Travis: No, but I thought you nailed it. You nailed it.

Teresa: Then he took his shows to Glasgow, to Edinburgh, to Brussels, all these different places because he was an excellent marketer. He was one of the first ones to use advertisements and stories to create doggy PR campaigns, right?

Travis: To, like, get you to root for certain contestants?

Teresa: Indeed, indeed.

Travis: [gasps] Brilliant.

Teresa: He also brought much needed innovation to the dog show circuit. He designed special railway carriages to help ensure that the prized pooches could safely travel to the show.

Travis: So important.

Teresa: And by 1891, an all-breed show was established in his honor and it still bears his name today.

Travis: The McGruff Competition.

Teresa: No, no.

Travis: Gruffed?

Teresa: Cruft.

Travis: Cruft.

Teresa: With a C.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: C-R-U-F-T, Cruft.

Travis: Okay. Makes a lot more sense.

Teresa: It does.

Travis: Hey, before we keep going, how about a thank you note for our sponsors?

[theme music plays]

[ad break]

Travis: Teresa.

Teresa: Mm-hmm?

Travis: I would like to teach you about Podia. And I know you don't know anything about it because we've definitely never talked about it before, but you'll see why me saying I wanna teach you about it is very appropriate.

Okay, just wait. Because Podia is a platform that gives you everything you need to run an online business. They've got a website builder, you can host and sell online courses.

Teresa: Ah.

Travis: So it's like I'm teaching you about how to teach people things.

Teresa: I get it.

Travis: Okay, you can also do digital downloads, distribute your email marketing, and run your online community. Podia is easy to set up, edit, and design yourself. No tech expert required. You will not need to ask your nephew about this one. You'll just be able to do it yourself.

Teresa: That's good.

Travis: That smart nephew, you don't need to call him. You know, you can, you should. I mean, you should check in on him, not just when you need, like, IT help.

Teresa: You know, I bet that Henry is better at computers than me.

Travis: Oh, without fail. Maybe he's better at Pokémon than me. He's better at Spider-Man than me. Why wouldn't he be better at computers?

Teresa: Especially if it's touch pad. Then, forget about it.

Travis: Yeah, oh yeah. Oh, kids these days with their tablets, ugh.

Teresa: But you won't need Henry for this.

Travis: No, you won't need Henry because you'll be able to do it easy. It's easy to use. You can do multiple things in one place, which, I don't know, if you're like me, you need that because you'll never remember to check all those places.

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Rachel: But I hate all that stuff!

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Griffin: For our next topic, we're talking Fiona, the baby hippo from the Cincinnati Zoo.

Rachel: I hate this little hippo.

[ad break ends]

Travis: Okay, where were we, my love?

Teresa: Well, we were celebrating Charles Cruft.

Travis: Of course we were. Cruft. I'm sorry, I broke your brain.

Teresa: Cruft! Cruft! That's your fault!

Travis: I know, baby, and I take full responsibility of it. Please forgive me. Please forgive me for talking about McGruff too much. Again, ugh, third time this week.

Teresa: So here's the thing. You can do some pretty cool stuff and still be a little sketch.

Travis: Oh no, what did Cruft do?

Teresa: Well. He tended to focus more on quantity of dogs instead of breed quality. He was also pretty flashy and commercial for the time.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: And he had a little bit of a reputation for being a grifter. So he would, like, routinely exaggerate the number of dogs in his shows to attract more news coverage, but then he would have rules that only, quote, "subscribers" could actually win prizes.

Travis: Hey, everybody go smash that like and subscribe button, get your dog out here, we got one billion dogs. That's right, a billion dogs. But only if you subscribe to my channel, can you get it.

Teresa: And, you know, these kind of shows also attracted a little bit of controversy, not just his shows. In the 1890s, dog shows were attended by all classes, right? Royalty, middle, working class, with the caveat that they had to be respectable working class, whatever that means.

Travis: Okay. Alright.

Teresa: So, you know, lots of people, all walks of life come into the shows, but also the dog breeds accepted had expanded. And so more and more people means more and more drama. Um...

Travis: Tell me about it.

Teresa: Well, winning dogs, very valuable. Stud fees on top, dogs were rising by the minute, and many of these shows offered cash prizes, so.

Travis: So people get robbed? Stealing dogs?

Teresa: Yes. Stealing dogs, right?

Travis: Ugh. And you mentioned stud fees. So there's stud fees for winning dogs. There's also, like, buying puppies from— So like, my dog growing up, our family friend had a show winning dog named McDougall, if I remember correctly.

He was a Scottish Terrier. And he sired a litter with a Scottish Terrier, once again, show winner named Belle. And that is where my dog, Nessie, came from. I got her for free because she was the runt of the litter.

I probably would have gotten her free anyways because she was, like, my mom's best friend. But normally, puppies sired and dammed by show winners ain't cheap.

Teresa: That's right. Also, these judges, who are they? Could they be bought?

Travis: Of course. Hey, baby—

Teresa: Are they friends with certain breeders?

Travis: Maybe they're the gamekeeper for the Earl who's dog happens to be in the competition. But we're talking 1890s; of course, they would be bought. And probably pretty cheaply.

Teresa: Probably.

Travis: Probably everybody would be weirded out if someone wasn't bought.

Teresa: So it was not unheard of for there to be spats between competitors and judges and audience members when rulings were perceived as unfair or all those types of things, right?

Travis: "Yeah, that dog won."

"What are you talking about? He took a poop in the middle of the thing!"

"Uh, never mind. Forget about it." Like, "ah, my dog's a hero, that dog's a zero!"

Teresa: But this, you know— From the very beginning, the idea of a dog show didn't sit very well with people because most of the dogs, especially at the beginning, were sporting dogs, right? And they were assessed on their look and shape rather than their abilities.

Travis: Oh, okay. I thought you were gonna say it because it was exploitative, but I'm betting in like, 1860s, they weren't worried about that so much.

Teresa: No, they weren't. So then the argument became, do we want pretty dogs or do we want dogs that are intelligent and helpful, right?

Travis: Yeah, because once you're talking about breed standard, right, if they're there to serve, like, if you're talking about like a herding dog or a hunting dog or something like that, it's like, okay, well, cool, it looks great,

but if we're talking about breed standard, it would have to be part of that as well, right?

Teresa: And now there are agility competitions and things like that are kind of, like, parsed out from that, like, sheep herding dog competitions and things like that, but at the time, and largely now, it's more based on dog looks.

Travis: If you've never seen a dog do a long jump competition, like off of a pier or something, treat yourself to some slow motion videos of dogs leaping through the air like absolute superheroes. It's incredible. Oh my God.

Teresa: So some unscrupulous practices followed, right? People would trim dogs ears for better shapes.

Travis: Ugh. The worst.

Teresa: They would color a dog's coat for better shine. Some would go so far as swapping out inferior animals at the last moment in troubling cases of canine identity theft.

Travis: What?

Teresa: There was even a report—

Travis: And they would ruin their canine credit.

Teresa: So there was a report once— Canine credit [laughs].

Travis: Thank you.

Teresa: They get credit checks.

Travis: Yeah, but for dogs.

Teresa: Dogs, I get it, I get it.

Travis: How many bones can you get and pay them back? I don't trust you.

Teresa: [laughs] There was a report of the same dog winning two competitions across the country in the same week. How did he do that? It turned out. The dog had a secret stunt double so that the actual champion could be whisked away to another competition right after awards. And the double sat out doing the other appearances the rest of the show.

Travis: Is that illegal?

Teresa: Um... It's not.

Travis: It's frowned upon.

Teresa: It's frowned up. 'Cause I mean, as long as the champion was the one who was being judged, right? And then gone somewhere else to get judged.

Travis: But part of the show, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: It's like you're paying, you wanna see the winning dog and, like, take a picture with it or whatever, sketch it. I don't know what time period we're talking about.

Teresa: We like to do that kind of stuff too. Also, the Kennel Club at this time was challenged over the safety precautions, right? Owners reported that some dog shows were petri dishes for fleas and other doggy diseases. Also having so many dogs close together can be absolute chaos, right? Barking and escaping and fighting and, I mean, these dogs weren't neutered, right? So lots of, um...

Travis: Potential unwanted pregnancies.

Teresa: Whoopsies.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So the Kennel Club—

Travis: And, um, can't stress enough, like we talked about earlier, when you have purebred dogs, right? And you're someone who cares deeply about that, then you probably care deeply about having purebred pups. And there are people who are, like, "you've ruined my dog." And it was, like, "well, your dog, I don't know, was being a hussy or whatever."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And like, that would cause a lot of fights about like, well, you're gonna have to pay me for the— 'Cause now she won't be able to put out a litter, like, this year and you're costing this much money. They take it very seriously.

Teresa: Very seriously. So the Kennel Club needed to quote, "get their life together," right? So they brought in a sanitary company, the Jai's sanitary company became an important sponsor of these shows, making sure the dogs were kept in hygienic conditions. They also finally set the judging standards, a series of standardized points that list desirable features for each point of the dog's body.

For example, minimum height, preferred shape of head, required confirmation of front and hind legs. You know, and all of these qualifiers change from breed to breed, right?

Also, they decided to start validating the identities of the dogs. They came up with a stud book. So you could record the lineage of your dog and their, you know, or your kennel of dogs, right?

Travis: Another reason that the having two parents that are show winners is important is to be able to say like, "And we can trace their lineage back through all these show winners. And this is why this puppy is worth so much money."

Teresa: And they were allowed to backdate them all the way back to the year of the first dog show. And by 1880, it became the National Register of

Pedigrees. And you can still, on the American Kennel Club website, look at some doggie family trees. If you're interested.

Travis: Yeah. Nessie was registered with AKC. I did not do it, but when she was born, the litter was registered by the people, you know, my mom's friend.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And so she was registered, which I, being a 10-year-old boy, didn't really appreciate it, didn't take a lot of pride in.

Teresa: And so 1884 is when the American Kennel Club is established and they just turned, like, you said, 139, actually. Um, and it's estimated that on Thanksgiving every year roughly 20 million people tune in after the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade.

So if you're one of those people, we hope you have a great time watching this year. After all, everybody worked pretty hard to get there, right?

Travis: I'm gonna make sure you watch it.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: You have to.

Teresa: That sounds like fun.

Travis: You know the girls will be into it.

Teresa: I hope so.

Travis: Like, we've had to stop as you're driving saying, "oh, look at that dog." Because by the time the kids look up and orient themselves, we're past it, and then they're very sad. So sometimes you see a dog and you're like, "oh, look at— Keep it to yourself, Travis. Don't share the dog with the world."

Teresa: I would like to go over some etiquette for attending a dog show in person.

Travis: Oh, please. I can't even imagine. What a dream, to be there amongst the champions? [gasps]

Teresa: I mean...

Travis: What if I got to wink at one of them? Can you imagine? A thing I used to do when I worked at PetSmart. I didn't care about the owner...

Teresa: Wink at dogs?

Travis: ... but I'd make eye contact with the dog and wink at the dog and I'd be like, "if I get caught doing this, I think that person will be mad and I don't know why." Oh, they will be.

Teresa: I don't think that you could get close enough to a dog in the ring to really wink at it.

Travis: I mean...

Teresa: You could have fun.

Travis: I can wink from pretty far away.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I don't want to toot my own horn.

Teresa: But would it be appreciated? I don't think so.

Travis: Yeah, by me. Okay, go on.

Teresa: Okay, so. Um, here are some etiquette tips from the American Kennel Club. Be very aware of time, because these can be multi-day shows or smaller local ones.

If you're at an official dog show, they run a tight ship because there are no do-overs, no time-outs, and so the handlers are on it, right? So don't talk to a handler about their dog until after they've been shown.

Travis: You probably shouldn't do that anyways. They're focused, that dog is locked in.

Teresa: They are. They are very focused. Abide by the signage and, you know, avoid anything roped off. There are certain areas only for competitors or for judges. Maybe there's a hospitality tent or whatever it is, right?

Travis: Don't eat the dog's biscuits. Those are their biscuits.

Teresa: Sure. Mm-hmm.

Travis: They work hard for those biscuits.

Teresa: And they probably taste like dog food, right?

Travis: Well, okay, you don't need to yuck anybody's yum. I'm sure there are people who enjoy dog food.

Teresa: [laughing] Sure, sure.

Travis: A lot of it is just, like, peanut butter and wheat or whatever, it's fine.

Teresa: Oh, I guess that's true. Gone are the days of "what's in that dog food?"

Travis: Yeah, you could eat dog biscuits and, not just be fine, really enjoy it. I've heard.

Teresa: [laughs] All right, absolutely ask before you pet, not for the regular reasons, right? We always say that you should ask if you can pet their dog because you want to make sure that you are not putting yourself or the dog in danger. But for this one...

Travis: [crosstalk]

Teresa: Absolutely, but for other reasons, right? A lot of these are judged merely on appearance, so they might have special grooming, right, to take place before the competition. Also, I mean, they are accustomed to strangers, but it's a high stakes environment.

Don't bring any unentered dogs to the show grounds. Obviously, if you have a medical animal or have needs for a service dog, there are exceptions to that, but you're not really supposed to put one sitting next to you in the crowd.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Um, you know, the dogs are already sharing pretty tight quarters and the handlers are... probably working overtime to distract their dogs. And so bringing your own dog from home could cause some unwanted ruckus. Also, children are not encouraged at these events. They're highly unpredictable. I know this.

Travis: Kids? What?

Teresa: Yes, children.

Travis: What? No, wait, hold on, kids?

Teresa: Also, a lot of these show dogs may not have been socialized with children. And because children are unpredictable, it can make dogs very anxious, right?

Travis: And kids also usually have food on them and that could be very distracting for dogs.

Teresa: Yep, definitely food, right? And especially, children in strollers are right at dog level. So, I mean, at worst, you get a child who's covered in drool and things like that, but it could very well stress out your child, right?

Travis: Yeah, that too.

Teresa: Being right there. Um, these are formal events. at least business formal, right? So much so that the exhibitors and the judges refer to each other as sir and ma'am. So no blue language, with the exception of the word bitch because it really does mean a female dog. So no swears and try not to giggle, right?

Travis: I mean, I can try.

Teresa: [laughs] And you mentioned that Nessie was the product of a couple of champion dogs...

Travis: Correct.

Teresa: ... but this isn't—

Travis: McTavish! That was his name, not McDougal! McTavish and Bell. Oh, I would have been so embarrassed if I didn't remember that.

Teresa: [laughs] But this is not the time to negotiate and shop for puppies.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Because again, this is the time where they're, like, competing and earning these accolades not where we're trying to like, make money.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: They do have show catalogs usually available. And then you can contact the breeders from there. Photography rules vary by venue. Most dog shows have specific rules about what is and whatnot as allowed to be photographed.

And this is an event where the applause is highly controlled as well. The dogs are concentrating, right? And there's a lot, there's pretty high stakes with all the dogs in the ring. They want to make sure that they are not stressed out. So there, it's not like a loud cheering event. Right? More... think golf claps.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: And like you said, the food. Having food around dogs, um, is a good way to not have food anymore.

Travis: Correct.

Teresa: Because the dogs will have your food. So there are usually very specific areas where food is allowed and don't keep any treats on your person. I know that feels nice when you're, like, in a park and you can give a dog a treat, but this is not when that happens.

Travis: To be fair, along those lines, you also shouldn't be just giving random dogs random treats unless you're getting okay from the owner...

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: ... because you don't know what the dietary needs of that dog are.

Teresa: Indeed. So, as we said, I will be watching this year, and I hope that you enjoy it as well.

Travis: Speaking of watching this year, coming up soon, we've got our Candlenights special. Every year. The McElroy family puts together an event called Candlenights where we raise money for Harmony House in Huntington, West Virginia, which is a place that helps people who are experiencing homelessness.

And this year we're doing it virtual again. We've got some special guests sending in videos. We've got segments from all of us. It's going to be airing on December 16th at 9 PM Eastern time, and then it will be available for two weeks after that.

Tickets are only \$5, but there is an option to give more if you would like to support Harmony House even further. There is an event exclusive poster that benefits Harmony House designed by Zach Sterling, and you can get your tickets now at bit.ly/Candlenights2023.

If you enjoy listening to Teresa and I talk about stuff, we've been recording our yearly Great British Bake Off podcast called The Bake On. So you can listen to that wherever you find podcasts. Just listen to us talk about the season of Bake Off by searching for Bake On.

Also, next Thursday for Thanksgiving, we're putting out Til Death Do Us Blart. Every year, me, Justin, Griffin, and our friends, Tim and Guy watch and discuss Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2 once a year, every year for the rest of our lives.

Teresa: Lots of good goofs this year. I heard some pretty riotous laughter.

Travis: That's true. Once again, it's called Til Death Do Us Blart. You can find it there. I'm gonna go ahead and say there won't be an episode next week because of the holidays, but we'll be back the week after that. Either that or we'll be putting it out early.

I don't know, folks. You know what I mean? Just keep your eyes peeled. We'll see what happens. What else, Teresa? Oh, and we wanna say thank you to our editor, Rachel, without whom we would not be able to make this show. Wanna say thank you to our researcher, Alex, without whom we could not make the show, and thank you for you, for listening. Why would we make this show without you, you silly goose?

Teresa: We also always thank Brent "Brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. 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, go ahead and join that group today. As always, we are taking your topic submissions, your idiom submissions, and just general chat-em-ups. You can send those to, what— Are you smiling at me?

Travis: I thought that was very cute. I enjoyed that immensely.

Teresa: Send those to shmannerscast@gmail.com and say hi to Alex, who reads every one.

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 Shmanners.

Teresa: Manners, Shmanners. Get it?

[theme music plays]

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