

## Shmanners 397: Knights

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[theme music plays]

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

**Teresa:** And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy.

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

**Teresa:** It's extraordinary etiquette...

**Travis:** For ordinary occasions. Hello my dove.

**Teresa:** Hello dear.

**Travis:** How are you?

**Teresa:** Hm.

**Travis:** You woke up with a little crick in your neck.

**Teresa:** Crick in my neck. Well, it happens.

**Travis:** The medical term, I believe.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** Yeah, weather.

**Teresa:** I'll work it out.

**Travis:** Oldness. Weather. Um... Bedtime back flips?

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** I don't know. What are doing?

**Teresa:** No backflips. Just sleepin'.

**Travis:** You ever see that— [sighs] You didn't grow up with cable, but did you ever see that commercial where the guy goes to sleep, and while he's asleep, gorilla comes in and like basically flips him all around the bed, and rubs it— And it's to explain like how you get bedhead.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** And like the gorilla's just standing there, just like flippin' the guy around, and he wakes up and his hair stands up all over the place. You know, you ever seen that?

**Teresa:** Nope!

**Travis:** Maybe that happened.

**Teresa:** I saw the one where they put the wine glass on the bed and they jump around it.

**Travis:** That's not nearly as good as the gorilla flippin' the guy around.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** Or the one for Orbits where she calls him a cootie queen and a lint-licker.

**Teresa:** Oh yeah.

**Travis:** That's really good.

**Teresa:** Yes, I have seen—

**Travis:** That one's great.

**Teresa:** That's a good one.

**Travis:** And IDK. And my BFF, Jill.

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

**Travis:** It's a good one.

**Teresa:** Mm, yeah.

**Travis:** And my baby, it's a boy. Anyways, welcome to *Shmanners*.

**Teresa:** [laughs] How'd I miss that gorilla one? I don't know.

**Travis:** How'd you miss the gorilla one. So... I'm excited to talk about this episode.

**Teresa:** Yes, it was your idea.

**Travis:** It was my idea, that's one reason. Two other reasons. One, I know that your favorite Disney animated movie is *Sword in the Stone*.

**Teresa:** Ye— Well, I mean... Okay, yes. Yes, it is. Followed very closely by *Sleeping Beauty*.

**Travis:** Oh.

**Teresa:** Which is also a medieval time period.

**Travis:** Sure sure sure sure. But I don't feel like you had to— I think you could've—

**Teresa:** My favorite princess movie. Let's— Okay, let's divide it into—

**Travis:** Okay, let's do this. Alright.

**Teresa:** Let's divide it into regular and then princess movie.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Favorite princess movie is *Sleeping Beauty*.

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Teresa:** It's beautiful.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** Favorite regular Disney movie.

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Teresa:** *Sword in the Stone.*

**Travis:** Okay. Okay. Phew, okay. I gotta update my ledger.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** But the third reason is this is— So we're talking about knights, right?

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** Like what it was really like to a day and a night.

**Teresa:** Ha.

**Travis:** And that's— Okay. And the thing is this is one of those categories. You know that thing went around that's like, "guys think about the Roman Empire a lot," right?

**Teresa:** Oh, yeah yeah. I remember that.

**Travis:** Oh yeah, it was like a month ago. And—

**Teresa:** [chuckles] It was more than a month ago.

**Travis:** Sure. And that's true. But I would say for me, like there are certain time periods and categories where I think "Could I have done that? Would I have done well? Would If I—"

I think there's a part of me every day that thinks if I was alive at a time where like all it took to be a king was like a piece of paper that you forged that said you were like distantly related to the royal line, and the ability to convince people, to be like, "Hey, come with me."

**Teresa:** [giggles]

**Travis:** “Let’s get that guy out of there and put me in there,” I think I would’ve done well.

**Teresa:** [chuckles] Okay.

**Travis:** I’m not saying I might’ve been king, but I would’ve been a really good sidekick to somebody who wanted to be king, where I’m going “Yeah, it sounds good man. Let’s do that.” Let’s talk about knights.

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Travis:** They started in 1950.

**Teresa:** Nooo. Quick shout out. If there are any other historical jobs that you’d like us to do a deep dive on, email [shmatterscast@gmail.com](mailto:shmatterscast@gmail.com). Because we’ve already done Victorian maid.

**Travis:** Correct.

**Teresa:** And old timey doctor.

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Teresa:** And garden hermit.

**Travis:** Yeah, we also did— One of my favorite episodes was the— was like the ball— where like we did the Debutante’s ball.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** Right? I really liked that one.

**Teresa:** We did Puritan Christmas.

**Travis:** Yeah. Any kind of deep dive into a very specific event or person, let us know.

**Teresa:** Okay. So... We need to go through what we think of, versus what we know. Okay.

**Travis:** Well, are you lucky, because I’ve seen *A Knight’s Tale*.

**Teresa:** Uh-huh.

**Travis:** I've seen a *Sword in the Stone*.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** I've seen... uh... probably a lot more. Camelot, *Spamalot*.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** Jamalot.

**Teresa:** Monty Python. [chuckles]

**Travis:** Jamalot is one I made up, but it's a store where they always sell jam.

**Teresa:** Uh-huh.

**Travis:** No jellies, get out of here. You're askin' for jelly?

**Teresa:** No, wah.

**Travis:** So a knight. Do you want me to tell you, or are you going to tell me?

**Teresa:** Well okay, so don't— Here's the thing. A lot of what we think of is Hollywood movies, not actual, historical references.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** In fact, a lot of what we think of was actually made up at the time of medieval knights.

**Travis:** Well, yes.

**Teresa:** Because what they were doin' was not what we think they were doing.

**Travis:** Well, I actually, can I say. Say what you will about *A Knight's Tale*, and what you will say is that it's an amazing movie.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** But... you have the Chaucer character, who's just like, "Yeah, let me make up this dude's whole... like backstory and intro about all the amazing things he's done and how good a knight is" and all that stuff, and it's like, "This guy wants money."

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** [chuckles] "This guy—" Well, at first. At first he's doing it for money. So, in *A Knight's Tale*.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** In the beginning.

**Teresa:** This— That's not what this episode is about.

**Travis:** Oh right, okay.

**Teresa:** This isn't a recap of *Knight's Tale*. Okay, so here are a couple of myths we need to go through. Knights were not the people's champion, okay? They were management.

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Teresa:** So knights swore allegiance to wealthy lords in exchange for land and power. In return for these huge tracts of land, knights would keep the peasants in line, in any means necessary.

**Travis:** They were cops.

**Teresa:** Kind of.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** They were kind of hired thugs.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Because this quote “code of chivalry” that we’re talked a little bit about, right?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** This— It— As in the fantasy of chivalry. The amorphous fantasy of chivalry? We were kind of like— Go listen to that episode, there’s a lot to unpack.

**Travis:** Well, I think— In all seriousness for a moment, if I may send jokes out of the room, when I talk about like, “men think about the Roman Empire and knights and cowboys and pirates” and stuff, right? I think it falls into that thing, that kind of made-up nostalgia that people do a lot.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** Where they’re like, “Ugh. It used to be better when I was a kid,” right? Or like, “I wish we could get back to how great it was in ‘name time period that they didn’t live in.’”

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Because... I think... Especially when it comes to it being mm misogyny, it tracks back to like this time when men were men, right?

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** And that kind of weird concept.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** That toxic masculine “Women were women, and men were in charge.” And—

**Teresa:** “And dogs were dogs.”

**Travis:** “And dogs were dogs, and that tree? That’s a tree.”



**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** "And that lake has a lady in it." And I think it's this thing of... a fantasy... nature that we try to treat as a reality.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** Whereas it's like, "No no no, this isn't like dragons and stuff. This really happened."

**Teresa:** And in fact, like, this code of chivalry, episode 202 if you're interested, really was made up kind of as... as it was happening.

**Travis:** Propaganda.

**Teresa:** As propaganda, right. The idea that knights were like— They had some kind of... code.

**Travis:** Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:** Was made up to make the knights who didn't really have a code look better.

**Travis:** Well, 'cause it really sells that idea of like, "Of course you should listen to them, of course they're in charge, they're inherently better than you."

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** "They live by a code, they're not just like status better than you, but like as people."

**Teresa:** If we're gonna go completely literally, "chival" is a play on the French word "chival," which means horse.

**Travis:** Yeah, it's a horse rider.

**Teresa:** So it's more about "Don't fall off your horse."

**Travis:** "Don't fall off your horse. Feed your horse."

**Teresa:** "Take care of that horse."

**Travis:** Take care of that horse. It's hard to replace a horse, back in the day. They were the cars of their day. [chuckles]

**Teresa:** So—

**Travis:** Horse, the pre-car.

**Teresa:** A pre-car?

**Travis:** It was a car before a car.

**Teresa:** Um...

**Travis:** I— Sorry.

**Teresa:** But—

**Travis:** Put the car before the horse.

**Teresa:** Ahh. So there is a medieval historian who says, "In the early Middle Ages, church councils were praying to be delivered from the knights." That's when the chivalry kind of like came in, where they were like, "Maybe if we tell everyone the knights are supposed to be good, the knights'll believe that they're good."

**Travis:** Well—

**Teresa:** "Maybe?"

**Travis:** — 'cause it was also like tax collectors, right?

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** 'Cause like the Sheriff of Nottingham is this kind of deal, right?

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** Of like they weren't really like there to protect anybody or take care of anybody. One of the reasons I think the churches were like, "Oh

boy" is because knights would show up to churches and be like, "Hey. Money pleasee.""

**Teresa:** Yeah. Again, the whole chivalry thing is pretty vague. It's got a couple of like, I guess, pillars of things like, "Be kind to women and respectful of nobility," maybe it's "Attend church every day," or maybe it's, I don't know, "Fight til the death." I'm not sure.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Okay. So. If you were a knight, you were probably a rich kid already.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Alright? There's— [sighs] There's not really any historical basis for the scrappy young man who comes from nothing and becomes a noble knight because he's so honest and brave and true.

**Travis:** Yeah. I mean, even in *A Knight's Tale*, they kind of had to lie.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** They had to like a lot.

**Teresa:** They definitely had to lie.

**Travis:** Or you could pull a sword from a stone.

**Teresa:** Also a lie, but great.

**Travis:** What?!

**Teresa:** [chuckles] Great idea. So knights were almost always born into nobility, there was some kind of like noble line moving through that, because you needed the cash.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Right? You had to acquire all your own armor and weapons and horses, and have some place to keep them.

**Travis:** And people.

**Teresa:** And people, yes.

**Travis:** 'Cause like you couldn't put on your own armor. You couldn't get on your own horses. You couldn't pick up your own lance when you were on the horse and wearing the armor. And you wanted somebody else to like knock the dings out of your armor, and sharpen your sword, and feed your horse, and clean your house. You had to have a staff.

**Teresa:** Yes. So, all of this stuff... means that if you were destined to become a knight, there were several increments of training that you had to go through. They were usually about seven-year periods.

**Travis:** This is when you were a page, right?

**Teresa:** Oh, so I'll get to that.

**Travis:** Oh, okay.

**Teresa:** I'll get to that. So first, you would stay home in the care of your family for the first seven years, okay? Your— Like people would teach you basic etiquette, and maybe even... some like reading or writing, but that also comes a little later.

Most knights, like you said, started as pages for their local lords. So a page was a servant to a lord or a nobleman, or even, you know, another knight. And it was... [sighs lightly] It was kind of a prestige servant gig.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Right? So you had normal kind of servant-y duties, which is why in the *Sword in the Stone* he does a lot of dishwashing. But it was also agreed that you would be taught to do things like hunt. Again, he does that in *Sword in the Stone*, right? Or care for horses.

And like I said, you might be taught to read or write at this point in your training. And then once you got a little older, in those next seven years, up to like 14 years old, you'd be taught to ride, and you would be taught like basic combat techniques, usually like with wooden sword—

**Travis:** Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:** — and stuff like that. And then, once you turned 14, you would graduate from page to squire. Again, in *Sword in the Stone*, he's really excited when he becomes Sir Kaye's squire, and when Merlin is like—

**Travis:** It creates some beef.

**Teresa:** It does. Merlin's like, "What? I was doin' a better job with you than— and he's a thug."

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** And... it was kind of a prestigious thing.

**Travis:** Luckily—

**Teresa:** For Arthur.

**Travis:** — or perhaps as fate would have it, there was a sword in the stone.

**Teresa:** Mmm... So the promotion of the squire is like kind of... It streamlines your duties. So you don't have those like normal servant-y things anymore, like dishes for example.

**Travis:** Mm.

**Teresa:** You were considered a formal knight in training, and you'd be assigned to an established knight to shadow. So you know, no more dusting and emptying chamber pots for you.

Now you are in charge of the upkeep of your knight's armor, as well as accompanying them into battle, by carrying supplies and banners and things.

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** It was also an exciting promotion because now when you practice fighting, you get to use real weapons, and you had a little bit of

your own armor. Because you weren't expected to march into battle completely uncovered. Right?

**Travis:** Yeah, no. That'd be wild.

**Teresa:** That would be wild. And it was—

**Travis:** Are we gonna talk about jousting?

**Teresa:** A little bit.

**Travis:** Okay, great.

**Teresa:** Yeah. It was expected that you would look out for your knight, and he also would look out for you. By doing this, he would teach you things like riding and swimming and fencing and archery and wrestling and weapons and dancing.

**Travis:** Now, all of this... I think, as I'm hearing it, I think should be— We should add the word "ideally."

**Teresa:** Yes, ideally.

**Travis:** Right? Because there definitely were, I would say... a position of privilege where the main thing was you needed to be rich.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** Kind of gives me the idea that maybe not everybody was going into knighthood for, to steal a phrase, the right reasons.

**Teresa:** [laughs] Yeeeeeah. Yeah.

**Travis:** Yeah. Okay.

**Teresa:** It's true. But—

**Travis:** Although, I would watch *Who Wants to be a Knight?*, a reality show, where in the end they get knighted by like an actual like country ruler. I would watch that show so hard.

**Teresa:** I know you would.

**Travis:** Are you kidding me?

**Teresa:** Speaking of knighting, once you turn 21, you were officially eligible.

**Travis:** To drink.

**Teresa:** To become a knight.

**Travis:** Oh.

**Teresa:** No, you could drink way before that. This is the Middle Ages, babes.

**Travis:** Oh right.

**Teresa:** And it's called an accolade, that's what the ceremony is called, and it would usually take place during a festival like Christmas or Easter, right?

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** And then you would take— So in order to become a knight in your accolade here, you would take a ritual bath, followed by an entire night of prayer.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Yeah, the whole night you were supposed to pray.

**Travis:** Meh, who's trackin' that?

**Teresa:** And then— Mm, your knight maybe is watching you?

**Travis:** Are you allowed to sleep? He's not gonna stay up. Are you kidding me?

**Teresa:** You don't know that.

**Travis:** That drunkard? That's what I assume.

**Teresa:** So in the morning the squire would kneel, swearing his loyalty to the lord or king or whoever that he served, and then they would complete the ceremony by tapping each shoulder with the ceremonial sword.

**Travis:** Yeah. Yes.

**Teresa:** We've seen that in movies. And it's pret— that part is pretty accurate. The squire knelt in the beginning, but then he would rise and a knight, right?

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** And that's when your official thug duties began.

**Travis:** Okay, we're gonna talk more about that, but first, how about a word from another MaxFun show?

**Teresa:** Alright.

[*Shmanners* theme music plays]

[clock ticks]

**Speaker One:** MaxFunDrive 2024.

[chess piece moving sound effect plays]

[clock button sound effect plays]

**Speaker Two:** MaxFunDrive? What about it?

[chess piece moving sound effect plays]

[clock button sound effect plays]

**Speaker One:** It'll be the best time for someone to support the podcasts they love.

[chess piece moving sound effect plays]



[clock button sound effect plays]

**Speaker Two:** Oh yeah! Drive exclusive gifts, special events, and of course all the amazing—

Both: [simultaneously] – bonus content.

**Speaker One:** Yeah.

**Speaker Two:** So what's on your mind?

[chess piece moving sound effect plays]

**Speaker Two:** Check.

[clock button sound effect plays]

**Speaker One:** Well, it starts March 18<sup>th</sup>, and it's only two weeks long.

[chess piece moving sound effect plays]

[clock button sound effect plays]

**Speaker Two:** And?

[chess piece moving sound effect plays]

**Speaker Two:** Check.

[clock button sound effect plays]

**Speaker One:** Well, what if they miss it?

[chess piece moving sound effect plays]

[clock button sound effect plays]

**Speaker Two:** Well, they should follow Max Fun on social media, or sign up for the newsletter at [maximumfun.org/newsletter](https://maximumfun.org/newsletter) so they don't miss it. Otherwise.

[chess piece moving sound effect plays]

**Speaker Two:** Checkmate.

[clock ticking ends]

[pause]

**Speaker Three:** Who guests on *Jordan, Jesse, Go*?

**Speaker Four:** I mean we could just list Patton Oswalt, Kumail Nanjiani, Maria Bamford, whatever.

**Speaker Three:** We couldn't remember all of them.

**Speaker Four:** So, we asked my kids.

**Child One:** Uh... Famous people.

**Speaker Four:** How famous?

**Child One:** I don't know, pretty famous.

**Child Two:** Uhhh... [inhales heavily] Uhhh...

**Child Three:** Really tiny celebrities, who would go on this... trainwreck instead of a— like a big talk show.

**Child Two:** [giggles] There's just a bunch of people on your show.  
[chuckles]

**Speaker Four:** *Jordan, Jesse, Go*.

**Speaker Three:** A comedy show for grown-ups.

[pause]

**Travis:** Alright. Okay.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** Alright, okay, alright.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** So, duties.

**Teresa:** Duties.

**Travis:** Let's talk about duties, duties, duties.

**Teresa:** [chuckles] You were expected to fight in any military campaigns backed by your boss.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** So again, you were hired muscle. You were also expected... to show bravery, whatever that meant at the time. To keep your noblemen's—

**Travis:** No retreat.

**Teresa:** — land in check. So, you know, if the times were peaceful and everyone was as subservient as expected, maybe you might partake in a tournament. Like you— I mean you've basically woven *A Knight's Tale* throughout this entire—

**Travis:** Yes, I have.

**Teresa:** — episode. And the tournament in that movie is pretty accurate.

**Travis:** Yeah. I mean, it's not that far off— We even see this repeated through history. Whether it's like the Colosseum, or like rodeos, right? Any time where it's just like entertainment.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** Helps keep people happy. Happy people are more willing to pay taxes and not overthrow the leader and not stage any kind of revolt, right? If you're like, "Hey, check it out. Hey, okay yeah. I know. I'm not a great leader, but... tournament."

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** “This is cool.” Another reason— And this is where you and I differ because my research is I heard somebody talk about this once and I’m pretty confident I remember it.

**Teresa:** Uh-huh.

**Travis:** But I’m pretty certain, as we talk about training and stuff, and jousting, it is where we get carousels from.

**Teresa:** Mmm.

**Travis:** Because they would have a horse, right? Rotating around, right, with the rider, and you would be on it and they would spin you around. And that’s where you would aim for the ring, right? Or you would aim for another horse.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** Because they didn’t wanna risk a horse getting hurt. Because as we said, horses were very... hard to come by, right? There wasn’t just go to the horse store and pick one up.

**Teresa:** Right, yeah.

**Travis:** They’re expensive and important. And so you would get on like a wooden horse that was on a big, long arm, and they would like spin the arm around, and you would aim, right? And so then they made that into a ride for kids, and that’s how we got the horses circling around, and then like you grab the ring.

**Teresa:** Yup.

**Travis:** And stuff like that, so jousting practice led to merry-go-round.

**Teresa:** We may have recommended this, but there is a merry-go-round museum in Sandusky, Ohio.

**Travis:** I hope it’s still there. I mean we haven’t—

**Teresa:** I think it's still there. They have an original merry-go-round from I can't remember when, the 19...

**Travis:** Old times.

**Teresa:** Old times.

**Travis:** At least 80 years ago.

**Teresa:** And it goes so fast, I really recommend it.

**Travis:** We've talked it up though. We have to talk about this where like we remember it going like 80 miles an hour or something.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** And it's like 15. Still fast.

**Teresa:** Still fast.

**Travis:** Still fast, but we remember it like, "Whoa! The world's a blur!"

**Teresa:** [laughs] It felt really fast. Okay. So, these tournaments were known as "hassaloots."

**Travis:** Okay. Okay.

**Teresa:** And that means like there were several events within. We've got the melee, right? Which is the free for all fight. Which you could do either on foot or on horseback. There's the tupinere, which is a duel a little bit like fencing, where you get certain points for hitting certain spots on the body.

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** And then the joust.

**Travis:** Yeah.

[pause]

**Teresa:** This became the most wildly popular event, and was also probably the most dangerous. [chuckles]

**Travis:** Yeah. Yeah!

**Teresa:** Because human and horse, riding at each other, trying to knock each other off the horse, can result in a lot of damage to human and horse.

**Travis:** Yeah. Well especially when you talk about like... The point was not just like, "Oh, I ride by and I poked your face" or like, "with my finger" or whatever.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** Which also, by the way, would've been pretty dangerous. But more of like, "I'm coming at you with a giant wooden spear, and when it broke it's more dangerous than it was before."

**Teresa:** Yah.

**Travis:** Right? And the idea of like, "Oh, the intent is to try to knock you off," right?

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** Like there's just so many things that could go wrong. Buuuut, just like Colosseum, just like a lot of things throughout history, that was part of it, right?

**Teresa:** Kind of, yeah.

**Travis:** Like if you think about it, listen, we ain't much better. Football is not that far off from like, "What a big hit!," and we hate when someone gets hurt. The difference is now, at least we pretend to hate when someone gets hurt. I do. Like football's not that far off as far as like—Organized sports in general, I would say.

**Teresa:** Organized sports, yeah.

**Travis:** Right? But football I would say has this like violence element to it, or like hockey, when it's like, "Yay, a fight!" Right? Like this idea, we're not that far off it, you know?

**Teresa:** But not every day is tournament day.

**Travis:** I've always said that.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** That's one of my like, you know, "Some days..."

**Teresa:** And hopefully, you won't always be going to war. So if you're a knight who's just, you know, kickin' it on your noble land, here's what your life might be like. A typical schedule for a rich kid turned servant turned personal warrior. Let's say you wake up tomorrow and you're in the Middle Ages, and you're—

**Travis:** And you're feelin' like P Diddy.

**Teresa:** [chuckles] – a respectful, respected knight named Sir Fancypants.

**Travis:** Okay. Okay.

**Teresa:** [giggles]

**Travis:** That's not what I would've chosen.

**Teresa:** What would you have chosen?

**Travis:** Probably like Sir Travis or somethin', but like Sir... Uh, Sir Thunder. Sir Lightning.

**Teresa:** [chuckles] Okay.

**Travis:** Sir Thunder Lightning.

**Teresa:** [chuckles] Sir Thunder Lightning. You probably have a stately manor house in your nobleman's land.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Because he pays you well to keep things orderly. And while not all knights would marry, maybe you have, and so your wife is also there. The home, possibly the wife, was gifted to you by the lord you serve.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** And you share it with your servants. You may have children, as kind of like continuing your line.

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** We'll talk another time on how many children are expected to survive.

**Travis:** Oh, okay.

**Teresa:** So, now that you're awake, first thing you do? Church.

**Travis:** [sighs quietly] Okay.

**Teresa:** Yup. Yup, gotta go to church, which would probably be pretty close to you.

**Travis:** Oh okay, that's good.

**Teresa:** So you wouldn't have to go very far. You might even, if you're—you are very... favored, have your own chaplain. And chapel in your house.

**Travis:** Ideal.

**Teresa:** Ideal. So then... you would do your prayers. This is about dawn, by the way. You would do your prayers and then come back for breakfast, which would usually be—

**Travis:** Once again, we've talked about this last episode, episode before, breakfast before church. Don't make me— [chuckles] Why am I going to church hungry?



**Teresa:** I know, right. I know.

**Travis:** This is a terrible idea.

**Teresa:** So you would have—

**Travis:** This idea, and it happens a lot, especially in Catholicism, or like restraint and stuff.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** And like fasting and all this stuff. [whispers] I don't understand. [normal] Why doesn't God want you to be happy? Go on.

**Teresa:** Anyway, so breakfast is usually bread and dried fruits or meats, something like—

**Travis:** That's not that far off what I eat now.

**Teresa:** Sure, yeah. And mead.

**Travis:** Well, it's healthier than water.

**Teresa:** At this point, yes.

**Travis:** Oh sure, at this point, yeah. That's what I meant.

**Teresa:** [chuckles] And you're well-off, so you can afford butter, and maybe cheese.

**Travis:** [gasps] What a day.

**Teresa:** And so you would then, after you've broken the bread, you would break away from your wife, and your wife would go and do their daily duties, and then you would go and do your daily duties.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** So after breakfast, weapons practice.

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** You have all that energy from eating, right?

**Travis:** Sounds great.

**Teresa:** This could be educating your page or your squire, dueling with, you know, wooden swords or blunted weapons, and then you might have time to work on your own skills like target practice... with maybe archery or also—

**Travis:** Accounting, typing.

**Teresa:** [chuckles] No. No, but you could use— There are a couple of like dummies that you would use at the time.

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Teresa:** This is part of your equipment, right? Called a “pell,” which is kind of like a medieval punching bag.

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** Right? So it was meant to be hit with the full strength, so you could measure your accuracy and the force of your blows.

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** You might also practice with a tree or a dummy set up to look kind of like a person.

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** Right. So after this kind of physical practice, than you would do study of strategy.

**Travis:** Mm.

**Teresa:** Maybe update yourself on any potential threats that you might need to quell. And— But if times remained peaceful, this was a great time for you to train for tournament.

**Travis:** Take a nap.

**Teresa:** No, probably not.

**Travis:** Oh. Yeah.

**Teresa:** And then you would pray again. And then eat lunch.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Which is probably a lot like your breakfast.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Yeeeah.

**Travis:** Turkey wrap.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** With some mustard.

**Teresa:** In the afternoon—

**Travis:** Cherry tomatoes, 'cause you gotta eat somethin'.

**Teresa:** In the afternoon, this was reserved for quote "softer skills," such as dance.

**Travis:** Crochet.

**Teresa:** Well, hm.

**Travis:** Typing.

**Teresa:** No. But—

**Travis:** Accounting.

**Teresa:** But business times, right? This is— might be when you might be asked to call upon your lord, to see if there's anything that they need from you.

**Travis:** "Hey bud. You need anything?"

**Teresa:** [chuckles] You might—

**Travis:** "Nah, I'm just bored."

**Teresa:** You might accompany them hunting or hawking or inspecting their land for rowdy peasants.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** And that was probably the biggest activity of your day during peacetime, was just kind of making your rounds. Making your presence known. Because as management, you were expected to deal with anything that might arise on the day.

**Travis:** "Hey peasants, yeah. So I'm gonna need you to come in and work."

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** "On Saturday."

**Teresa:** Supper. Might actually be a grander affair. Either at your manor house.

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Teresa:** Or you could go to the castle hall with your boss, and of course, you know you gotta pray before you eat.

**Travis:** Of course.

**Teresa:** But after prayers and supper, which probably was like roasted meat.

**Travis:** [firmly] Nice.

**Teresa:** Maybe vegetables, depending upon the time period. And you know, wine.

**Travis:** Sure, I've heard of it, yeah.

**Teresa:** So after that, there could be entertainment.

**Travis:** Movies!

**Teresa:** Nooooo.

**Travis:** Oh.

**Teresa:** Music.

**Travis:** I've heard of that, yeah.

**Teresa:** Dancing.

**Travis:** Okay. This is where I need to know how to do that.

**Teresa:** Yup.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Jugglers, acrobats, jesters, things like that, right? And this didn't happen every single time, but usually a king or a lord would keep somebody who knew how to do kind of these things.

**Travis:** Can I say, as much as, in my younger days, I was like, "I think I'd be a knight," I'd be a jester.

**Teresa:** Yup, totally.

**Travis:** Oh my god, could you—

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** You could've given it like, "Yeah..."

**Teresa:** Well, here's the thing.

**Travis:** "Maybe I could see you as a knight."

**Teresa:** I think that while you would've made an okay knight, you would make an excellent jester.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** Why squander your gifts?

**Travis:** Yeah, that's true.

**Teresa:** Is what I'm saying.

**Travis:** Jester or a herald. I think I'd be a great herald too. Like, "Hey everybody."

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** "Bad news. I'm not saying this! This isn't coming from me. Don't shoot the Travis, but doubling taxes, okay byyye!"

**Teresa:** Yeeeah. Yeah, so that sounds like a pretty typical day, right? Lots of praying.

**Travis:** Lots of busy work.

**Teresa:** Well, you had to keep up appearances, right?

**Travis:** But this is what I'm saying is like I think that... [sighs]

**Teresa:** And your wife would probably also be continuing to keep up appearance by giving alms to the poor. You know, wrapping up the leavings from your breakfast or whatever and giving it to the peasants on the street.

**Travis:** But I think that when people think about knights, right?

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** They do picture like riding off on missions, and slaying dragons, and posing dramatically atop their horse on a windswept bluff.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** Or what have you, right? And this just sounds like, "Yeah, wake up, praying. Do stuff, do this, check on things, talk to this person, practice this, train, have some dinner, maybe watch somebody tell a joke or two, go to bed."

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** And it's like yeah, it's not adventure.

**Teresa:** This was a job.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Right? And you were compensated well for your job. And some people took this job a little more seriously than others, for sure, right?

That's when we talked about earlier, how like the code of chivalry was kind of like made up at the time to try and maybe make people think that knights were better, maybe think that— make the knights think that they should do better, right? Because—

**Travis:** At the very least, inspire— Like try to inspire, I guess, like this young rich kids who are going to be knights, of like, "And it's not just about the posi— Look at the glory of it!"

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm, yeah. I wouldn't say that this was a cushy job, because in the Middle Ages there's no such thing as a cushy job.

**Travis:** No.

**Teresa:** But it is kind of, like I said, it's— you—

**Travis:** Steady.

**Teresa:** Steady, you had to keep— Put you did have to do a few things. You had to keep in shape if you were gonna keep the peasant in check,

right? You had to know what you were doing and be kind of like, ferocious about it.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** But you were still beholden to somebody who basically gave you everything you have.

**Travis:** Well, that's the other thing, right. When we talk about— When we— When you think about like, "Ah, when men were men." Like you swore fealty to this dude who, if that dude was like, "Hey. These peasants are gettin' real uprise-y. If you could go in and just like kill 50 of 'em, that would be awesome."

And if you were like, "Well, I don't wanna do that," they'd be like, "Okay, cool. You're imprisoned now, and I'm gonna give someone else all your stuff, 'cause they'll do it."

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Not ideal. That part's not ideal. I liked the roast meat part.

**Teresa:** Oh yeah.

**Travis:** And I— Havin' some wine with a lord, and having a house. Not wild about the part where I'm doing kind of lord-imposed violence.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** And corruption. Not wild. That part doesn't get me. I wanna be the people's knight. I wanna be the people— Who gives me my authority? People do.

**Teresa:** That would be great. But—

**Travis:** The best part is—

**Teresa:** — is fantasy.

**Travis:** — I don't need that to be respected by the lord. That's kind of the point, you know what I mean?



**Teresa:** Ohhhh. Alright.

**Travis:** They don't have to acknowledge it, the people do.

**Teresa:** Mmm...

**Travis:** Wait, I'm thinking of The Rock.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** The Rock is the people's knight, now that I think about it. Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson is the people's champion. Okay. Okay. You know what? That position's taken. I would love to be a jester for The Rock. I would take that job any day.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** No, Kevin Hart has that job!

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Agh!

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Every good job's taken. Hey everybody, thank you so much for listening. This is a very fun episode. Thank you to myself for having the idea.

**Teresa:** Uh-huh.

**Travis:** Thank you— Sorry, excuse me.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** What was that?

**Teresa:** Thank you to Alex, our writer and researcher.

**Travis:** I was about to say that. Thank you to Alex, our writer and researcher. Without you, we couldn't make this show. Thank you to Rachel, our editor, without whom we could not make this show, and thank you to you for listening. I'm your champion, I do it all for you.

**Teresa:** [giggles]

**Travis:** No matter what Teresa says. It's a new month which means new merch over at [mcelroymerch.com](http://mcelroymerch.com), so if you haven't checked it out, go over there and do that.

We're doin' some live shows in Chicago in April. Doin' *My Brother, My Brother and Me* and *The Adventure Zone*, as well as appearing at C2E2. You can go to [mcelroy.family](http://mcelroy.family) for all the info there. What else, Teresa?

**Teresa:** We always thank Brett "Brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found.

Also thank you to Bruja Betty Pin-Up 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, please continue to submit your topic suggestions and historical jobs.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** We'll add that in. Idioms. Questions.

**Travis:** Have we ever done a biography on Marie Antionette?

**Teresa:** Hmm...

**Travis:** I think that would be really interesting.

**Teresa:** To [shmannerscast@gmail.com](mailto:shmannerscast@gmail.com), and say hi to Alex, because she 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.

[outro theme music plays]

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