

Shmanners 407: Queen Victoria, Part 1

Published May 17th, 2024

[Listen here on mcelroy.family](#)

[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: Ah, how are you?

Teresa: Ah, yeah. Yeah.

Travis: Ah, ah. Yeah. I find myself... because I've been dealing with allergy stuff for the last couple— forever, it feels like.

Teresa: [chuckles] Right, forever.

Travis: But I now appreciate a lot more why radio professionals develop a radio voice.

Teresa: Mm.

Travis: Instead of just using their own voice so much. One, you gotta turn it on, right? You gotta sparkle. But two, having that thing that's like, "And I'm gonna drop into this," is like yeah man, even if you're sick, you don't wanna come in with like, "[sickly] Yeah, now here's another one from the Foo Fighters."

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: Right? You wanna be able to like, “[more upbeat] And now here the new one by Foo Fighters,” or whatever, you know how they do it.

Teresa: I mean, do they do it really anymore?

Travis: No

Teresa: I can’t remember the last time somebody introduced a song. I guess maybe on like— So on Sirius, which like we have in the car, there’s like TikTok channel... and sometimes they have like—

Travis: I don’t know, people at home, if you could hear my eyeroll.

Teresa: [chuckles] Sometimes they have like—

Travis: Sometimes a song is— Just because a song is like fun as a sound for like 15 seconds, and you play the whole song like, “I don’t wanna hear the whole song.”

Teresa: Yeah, ‘cause they—

Travis: [chuckles] “I’m not on Spotify scrolling,” you know what I mean?

Teresa: I mean I don’t care about that.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: What I’m talking about, I’m talking about is sometimes they have amateur... DJs or whatever, like unestablished people, guest artists or whatever, introduce songs. And I feel like that still happens.

Travis: Mm.

Teresa: But like a regular DJ doesn’t introduce songs anymore.

Travis: This has nothing to do with what we’re talking about this week.

Teresa: It doesn’t, you’re right.

Travis: Absolutely zero. But one more thing I wanna say—

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: — that has absolutely— I was telling Teresa this the other day, the problem with having allergies and allergies making you sick is you get absolutely zero sympathy.

Teresa: Correct.

Travis: When you cough a bunch and someone's like, "Oh, what's wrong?" And you're like, "Oh man, allergies are really getting to me," the response without fail is "Oh yeah man, me too," or, "Yeah, it's that season."

No one's ever like, "Oh my god, you poor baby," you never get that for allergies. No one's ever like, "You have allergies? Oh no! Do you need anything? Do you need to lie down?" They're like, "Yeah. Yeah, that'll happen."

Teresa: Aww, this shared human experience.

Travis: I hate that. I want sympathy, I want presents, I want a warm blanky.

Teresa: No.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Any who.

Teresa: Hey, so... let's say... that if... Emily Post is our patron saint—

Travis: I knew this was what you were gonna say 'cause it's what I was thinking too. Yeah.

Teresa: Vic— Queen Victoria is our mascot, right?

Travis: Hmm. No— Ugh.

Teresa: So if she's the patron saint with that, we've got Queen Victoria as the mascot?

Travis: I would say more she's like a quarterback, right?

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Like she called the plays.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Right, like she— when— 'Cause when you think about like a football team dynasty, right? And we talk about the Patriots and Tom Brady, right?

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: You talk about John Elway and the team he played for, which I think was the Broncos... Joe Montana who played for the 49ers? Don't quote me on this.

Teresa: You just keep saying "Football football football." [giggles]

Travis: Anyways, but like people will talk about those—

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Like the team lead by this person, right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And I feel like that then influences many of us that come afterwards.

Teresa: Sure, because when— even when we're not talking about her, we're probably talking about her.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: That's the thing, right? She has appeared in countless episodes her us. Let's see, makeup, Christmas trees, weddings, just to name a few.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: She's—

Travis: Even into like greeting cards.

Teresa: Yup.

Travis: I think was in there. We talked about flower arrangements, that's in there.

Teresa: Yeah, she is the titan of industry. A ruler of fashion and a trend-setter extraordinaire. As well as a fierce political leader.

Travis: I like how you started to go into a lot of like—

Teresa: [giggles]

Travis: — when they used to show like newsreels in movie theatres, and it's like, "She's a titan of industry!"

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: Boop boop boop. "A city on the grow!"

Teresa: So—

Travis: To be fair, also a colonizer.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: And not— probably not great per— I mean, not great person for the colonizing.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And a lot of things to do with, let's say, non-English non-white countries.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And plenty of stuff to not be proud of.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Like stealing stuff from places and putting 'em in museums. Not good.

Teresa: And, you know, supporting people who ate animals into extinction.

Travis: Yeah. Sure. But it is impossible to deny the impact that she had on culture and manners and etiquette and—

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: — just the way that— Traditionally the way we do things.

Teresa: We're gonna talk about that side of the coin, because the other side of the coin definitely exists.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: You are correct, sir. Okay. But, this is her birthday month, and her birthday—

Travis: So she celebrates the same way I do. I get it.

Teresa: [chuckles] It's on May 24th, and this year she would've been 205?

Travis: Nice.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: The big one.

Teresa: The big one.

Travis: This is the one people always talk about. The centenni— The bicentennial [mutters] plus five.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: The five to grow on, as they say.

Teresa: So here is part one of her storied and complicated legacies. The life of Queen Victoria.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Alright. Just for some background. [chuckles]

Travis: You guys know about England?

Teresa: You guys know about England?

Travis: You guys heard about this place, England?

Teresa: Victoria ruled over England for a period of 63 years, and is to this day still considered one of the most influential monarchs in English history.

Travis: Yeah. Well, I mean, and I'm sure we'll talk about this, but her reign spanned like the six decades where a lot of stuff was happening.

Teresa: Yeah, and it is— it's called— a "historical period"—

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: — is named after her.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: The Victorian Era.

Travis: I mean it's like— Oh, see I was about to guess when I thought she reigned, and then I thought "Nope. Don't even. Don't even. Don't even go for it." If I had to guess, may I guess?

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: Said 63 years, I'm— It's feeling in my heart like 1840 to 1900, somewhere close to that, not exactly those dates, obviously, but something like that? Is that... it?

Teresa: 1837 to 1901.

Travis: [sings] "Weeee are the champions." For once. For once, please. Please, everybody, shh shh shh.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: Quiet, quiet. Let me make this speech. For once in the 36 years we've been recording *Shmanners* I guessed a date correctly. Now I know what you're saying at home. Yes, I have countless points of reference.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: To guess this from, 'cause we've talked about this so many times and I knew it wasn't like the 1200s. Yes I know, but please. Please, let me have this. I basically nailed it. Thank you. Thank— Oh my god, flowers?

Teresa: Uh-huh.

Travis: Oh my god, thank you.

Teresa: So here's the thing, right. This was a very formative part of like human history.

Travis: Yes, this is what I'm saying.

Teresa: And had it been her or someone else, it was prime, right? There was like the prime time.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: For change in the Western world, and for—

Travis: Good and bad.

Teresa: Good and bad, yip. And for just the way that communication accelerated, right?

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: That made Queen Victoria the kind of like trendsetter, right?

Travis: Well, and just—

Teresa: The role model for fashion and industry and culture. And the thing is even if you don't know about Queen Victoria, there are aspects of our lives today that directly relate to her.

Travis: Well, you also have to think, right? 1840 to 1900, Industrial Revolution blossoming, expanding. Rail roads and ship travel becoming normalized. Getting into like radio— [mutters] Oh, I don't know when radio went. [normal] Anyways, you know, all of these things.

Teresa: Gas lighting, plumbing.

Travis: All of these things going, but I don't think—

Teresa: Sewer system.

Travis: I think that history is full of... not just right place right time, but right person.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Right to become the historical figure we know them to be. Right? Where it's like yes, this was a very transitional time and it was the perfect time where there was a vacuum and they were looking— like it was the right time to be on top of this thing. And also this person was good at it, and that's why we know about them today.

Teresa: And also she was a historian's dream. She was a voracious writer—

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: — and kept countless journals and letters and correspondences that document her daily life, from a teenager all the way up until the time of her death, right. So—

Travis: And she had like 26 children, so—

Teresa: [chuckles] Not 26.

Travis: But a lot, right?

Teresa: A lot.

Travis: So that spread influence, and the love story with Albert is fun to write about.

Teresa: Well she—

Travis: People love to write about that.

Teresa: She birthed the crown heads of Europe, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Her lineage... quickly travelled all across the globe, right.

Travis: And when you colonize a bunch of places, you can put your face on a bunch of money and flags—

Teresa: That's true.

Travis: And posters and make people talk about you.

Teresa: Yip. We'll talk about her being quote "declared Empress of India."

Travis: Cool.

Teresa: Another day.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: This is part one, this is early life. A queen is born.

Travis: She was born a baby.

Teresa: [chuckles] You wouldn't have thought so.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: But yes. Yes, she was. And she was born in the highest possible social seat, political seat, that a person could have been born into.

Travis: And she fell off of it.

Teresa: Her— [chuckles]

Travis: But she survived.

Teresa: Her grandfather was King George III who was reigning over England at the time of her youth, her father was Prince Edward, the Duke of Kent, her mother was Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, who was born in Germany before she became the Duchess of Kent, and Victoria was their only child.

Travis: Hmm.

Teresa: Talk about puttin' all your eggs in one basket, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: At a time where a lot of children did not survive into adulthood.

Travis: Well she was their only child period?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Not their only surviving child.

Teresa: No, their only child.

Travis: Do you know— I mean it might not be in your notes, but did they struggle with it, or were they just like, “Yeah”?

Teresa: It’s unknown.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: No, that’s not true. It may be known, but I don’t know.

Travis: It’s unknown by you.

Teresa: I don’t know.

Travis: That— I— Hey, can I tell you? That’s the same kind of tact I take.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: When our children are like, “Why does this thing happen?”

Teresa: [chuckles] “Nobody knows.”

Travis: If I don’t know, I’ll say, “Nobody knows.”

Teresa: [laughs] Uh-huh.

Travis: To which Teresa from the other room will yell like, “No, people know. Don’t.”

Teresa: [chuckles] Alright. By all accounts, with that kind of like family ties, Victoria would’ve been raised royal no matter what, but things got complicated shortly after she was born May 24th 1819 at Kensington Palace in London. Her father Edward, who was the fourth son of George III, and the heir to the throne, died of pneumonia not even a year later.

Travis: Yeah, I was gonna say the— Yeah, okay.

Teresa: And so, you know, she would never get to know her father, and that’s tragic. But as a baby—

Travis: And a single mother raising her must've been so hard.

Teresa: As a baby—

Travis: Oh, the struggles of single mother.

Teresa: There's— Not when you have money like that.

Travis: Oh right.

Teresa: As a baby, there is no way she could've comprehended exactly what happened.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: At that moment when her father died.

Travis: Hey, I love you so much, I think that goes without saying.

Teresa: Ehhhhh.

Travis: That's like physics. As a baby, there's no way she could've—

Teresa: Well you know what I mean.

Travis: I do, I do. She couldn't process as a baby. She just had to sit there and go, "Oh, goo goo."

Teresa: Mm. A week after her father passed, her grandfather died as well, leaving her uncle George IV to step into the role of king, but George IV had no legitimate heirs.

Travis: Mmm.

Teresa: Which meant that she was it. She was next.

Travis: Did you hear about the king who wore a toupee?

Teresa: No.

Travis: He had no legitimate hairs.

Teresa: Ahhhh.

Travis: Thank you. I just came up with that, that's good, right?

Teresa: And then—

Travis: That was pretty good, right?

Teresa: Yeah, that was pretty good.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: That was very good. And then from the moment she could possibly comprehend it, she would be told, every day of her life, that she would one day be queen. Like it was like that was like the weight that was put on her proverbial shoulders from the second that she could understand. Right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: That's a lot. That's a lot. And at this point in time, women weren't allowed to control their finances or property or— You were literally at the whims of your male family.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: And she was expected to be monarch of Britain.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: I mean that's a lot, that's a lot. To the— make things a little more complicated, she only spoke German.

Travis: Yeah, hard to be the Queen of England.

Teresa: Right, well because her mother only spoke German.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: But they started right away to remedy that. And here we have John Conroy.

Travis: Okay, so we talked a lot about this...

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Travis: In the love story episode.

Teresa: Yes, we did.

Travis: Betwixt her and Albert, where John Conroy was like— [sighs] I'm trying to remember, was it like her mom's boyfriend? Her mom's consort?

Teresa: Mmmmm.

Travis: Her mom's advisor?

Teresa: Maybe. Not officially.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: He was appointed to be the comptroller of Baby Victoria, and her mother, which—

Travis: What a weird— If someone was like, "What do you— What's your dad do for a living?"
"He's the comptroller of a baby."

Teresa: Well so basically it's like the high-level accountant.

Travis: Oh I know, but that's not what it sounds like. Even then, you don't wanna be a baby accountant, because then it's gonna sound weird. But then I guess accountant baby.

Teresa: Mm.

Travis: Is your baby who is an accountant.

Teresa: *Boss Baby.*

Travis: Baby accountant, you're an accountant for a baby.

Teresa: *Boss Baby*.

Travis: Okay. No. I didn't say boss—

Teresa: You're the boss— *Boss Baby*.

Travis: You're not *Boss Baby*. Baby boss— It should be *Baby Boss*.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: "Baby boss" means that you're a boss that's a baby. But no, "baby boss" is you're a boss of babies? Yes, okay. We're on the same page now.

Teresa: Yes, we're on the same page.

Travis: I'm sorry everybody.

Teresa: Put Conroy was involved in way more—

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: — than just the finances. As you suggested, he may have also been romantically involved with her mother.

Travis: [quietly] [in a German accent] "He. Was. My. Boyfriend!"

Teresa: [giggles] So, he was a bit of an opportunist, of course.

Travis: Sure! Well, what comptroller isn't?

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: I don't know what a comptroller does. Is it an accountant?

Teresa: Yes, that's— I said that.

Travis: Okay. Sounds like someone— like a robotic controller.

Teresa: But given the opportunity to social climb in one of the most powerful institutions in a world—

Travis: And a vacuum. It sounds like a power vacuum where it's like the queen is a baby. Right, more or less, and you are partnered with her mom.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And it's just like, "Okay, cool man. World's your oyster. Shuck it."

Teresa: The— It's this point of the copy where Alex gives a shout out to one of her favorite like YouTube creators that gave a lot of this to this section, so I wanna shout out Simon Whistler, the YouTube channel Biographics.

Travis: Is the last name like W-H-I-S-T-L-E-R?

Teresa: Yes. Conroy, in many ways, became a stage parent, right?

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Managing the star.

Travis: [in a gruff, showbiz voice] "You gotta get up there and sparkle, baby."

Teresa: And while the affair with her mother was never officially confirmed, it would definitely speak to the chokehold that Conroy has over Victoria's childhood.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Let's tell it like it is, right.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: She did not want for anything.

Travis: Yeah. No, yeah.

Teresa: Right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: She was raised in beautiful—

Travis: Well, now hold on. What you mean is...

Teresa: Physically.

Travis: Any physical items, right?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Because listen, there's a lot goin' on here, but context like I doubt very much that she was like, "I wouldn't change a thing," right?

Teresa: Oh no no no.

Travis: Like she got the prince and pauper stuff.

Teresa: Right, right.

Travis: And...

Teresa: No, she definitely did not like her home life, but the kids weren't poor, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Not poor. Beautiful Kensington Palace apartment with toys and clothes and servants and teachers and—

Travis: You know, it's occurring to me— Sorry to jump in.

Teresa: Mm.

Travis: That if her dad died less than a year after she was born, that's probably why they didn't have more kids.

Teresa: Mmmmm.

Travis: That probably would stop— I'm no doctor.

Teresa: Mmmm.

Travis: But I'm almost certain... that a couple, if one of 'em dies before they get a chance to make more kids, it makes it difficult for those two people to make more kids together.

Teresa: Well, there could've been children who did not survive before her.

Travis: I guess that's true, but it does explain why they weren't like, "We had one kid, and we're like you know what? This is all we need."

Teresa: Yeah. [chuckles] They were like wash their hands of this. So Victoria, although she did want for nothing physically, right?

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: She would describe her childhood as "melancholy."

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Because her mother was extremely protective, kept her largely isolated from other children.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And they... The Duchess of Kent and Conroy developed an elaborate set of— set of rules, which we've talked about before, called the "Kensington System."

Travis: Cool. What a cool way to do things.

Teresa: [sighs] Yeah, what a cool way to let kids be kids. So she studied with private tutors on a very strict timetable, she learned French and German and Italian and Latin, but only spoke English at home.

Her mother and Victoria shared a bedroom for their entire time together, and she was chaperoned every single place that she went. She was not

permitted to go to school, to play with other children, to fraternize with anyone that Conroy and—

Travis: Conroy.

Teresa: Sorry, yeah. [chuckles] Conroy and her mother deemed quote “unsuitable.”

Travis: Oh boy.

Teresa: Which included a large amount of her father’s family. [chuckles]

Travis: Yeah, it does— The very stage parent, and both of `em, it sounds like very stage parent, yeah.

Teresa: I mean, the—

Travis: In a bad way. Listen, you can be a supportive stage parent, that’s not what I mean. Don’t write— Don’t X me.

Teresa: Those Georges.

Travis: Don’t X me.

Teresa: Those Georges at the time, they were philanderers, they were gamblers.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: There are some really amazing political cartoons.

Travis: Oh, I’ve seen them.

Teresa: Oh yeah.

Travis: That was with the whale? With the wi—

Teresa: No, that’s the Prince Reagent.

Travis: Oh, right.

Teresa: That was before this, but there's some really great political cartoons about just their kind of like Devil may care lifestyles.

Travis: Mm.

Teresa: You could also say though that they didn't really care about Victoria's well-being.

Travis: Yeah, no they were protecting—

Teresa: They— Yeah, they cared about—

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: — Victoria as an institution, right?

Travis: As a property.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: You know.

Teresa: And it is said that they were hoping that they could mold her and break her into a puppet they could control.

Travis: Yeah, it sounds like that.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: That— I would've guessed that anyways.

Teresa: But!

Travis: But now it's time for a word from another MaxFun show.

Teresa: [giggles] You got me.

Travis: Yup.

[transition theme music plays]

[announcement tones play]

Janet Varney: Hello teachers and faculty, this is Janet Varney. I'm here to remind you that listening to my podcast, *The JV Club with Janet Varney*, is part of the curriculum for the school year.

Learning about the teenage years of such guests as Alison Brie, Vicky Peterson, John Hodgman, and so many more is a valuable and enriching experience. One you have no choice but to embrace, because yes, listening is mandatory.

The JV Club with Janet Varney is available every Thursday on MaximumFun, or wherever you get your podcasts. Thank you, and remember, no running in the halls.

[announcement tones play]

[electronic beat machine plays]

Speaker One: If you need a laugh and you're on the go, try S-T-O-P-P-O-D-C-A-S-T-I— [sighs] Hmm.

[beat stops]

Speaker Two: Were you trying to put the name of the podcast there?

Speaker One: Yeah, I'm tryin' to spell it, but it's tricky.

Speaker Two: Let me give it a try.

Speaker One: Okay.

[electronic beat machine plays]

Speaker Two: If you need a laugh and you're on the go, call S-T-O-P-P-P-A-D— Agh, it'll never fit.

[beat stops]

Speaker Three: No, it will. Let me try.

[electronic beat machine plays]

Speaker Three: If you need a laugh and you're on the go, try S-T-O-P-P-P-P-D-C-O-O...

[beat stops]

Speaker Three: Agh! We are so close.

[electronic beat machine plays]

Speaker Two: *Stop Podcasting Yourself.*

Speaker Three: A podcast from maximumfun.org.

Speaker Two: If you need a laugh, and you're on the go.

[pause]

Travis: Okay, sorry. What were you gonna say?

Teresa: Ahem.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: But.

Travis: But.

Teresa: One day, when she was 18 years old, her mother woke her in the dead of night to tell her that the king had passed away. Young Victoria descended down the steps and she found the Archbishop of Canterbury kneeling before her. There she goes. Queen.

Travis: She's queen. She's queen now.

Teresa: She's queen. That's a lot of pressure. Right? 18? A young person.

Travis: What would you rather— This— Would you rather... Because I'm sitting here thinking what do you think would be less—

Spending your entire life being told you're gonna be queen, you need to, you know, shape up and we're gonna figure out— we're gonna train you to be queen. Or a circumstance in which like you had no idea, right.

Maybe even you've been living as just a normal person. And then somebody comes to you when you're like 18 and is like, "Hey, you're a Queen now."

Teresa: Mm.

Travis: Right?

Teresa: Which one do I think would be better?

Travis: Which one would you rather? Yeah. That's what "Would you rather" means. Which one would you prefer? Oh my god. Okay, folks at home, I love my wife so much.

Whenever I ask her a question like this, I can watch her brain spin up into like, "Well now, ooph. Think of all the— I gotta figure it out from every angle."

Teresa: No.

Travis: Just go with your gut. What's your gut say?

Teresa: I think it would be better to know from day one. I wouldn't want the surprise.

Travis: As long as you— I think— I mean, obviously there's other factors here but I would rather that too, assuming it's like, "And you're being trained by cool people and it's fun."

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Right? And not like... which, you know, of cour— I feel more comfortable saying that as a boy, 'cause throughout time—

Teresa: Mmm... Mmm.

Travis: That probably would've been more the vibe for me.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: But there is something about like, you know, you see it in a lot of like mostly Anne Hathaway movies.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: It's like, "Now you're queen," and you're like, "Oh, I gotta figure this all out."

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: "Ah, what fun."

Teresa: It did afford her, obviously, status above her mother and Convoy. Conroy. [sighs] You were lookin' at me. I can't do it.

Travis: Sorry, I'll stop loo—

Teresa: I can't do it.

Travis: I'll stop looking at you?

Teresa: I can't do it. [chuckles]

Travis: Is that better? [sighs]

Teresa: And so, finally, she was able to start makin' some of her own rules.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: She almost immediately—

Travis: It feels a little bit like—

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: — when a kid goes off to college.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And it's like they've lived in a strict household, and now they're like partyin' hard for like two years, and then by like junior year they're like, "I gotta calm it down." [chuckles]

Teresa: [chuckles] Well, she didn't really party very hard ever. But here's the thing.

Travis: But I mean as far as like buckin' the system.

Teresa: On the day of Victoria's proper coronation, the Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, was so moved by the ceremony that he had tears in his eyes.

Travis: Mmm.

Teresa: And when Victoria greeted him, he looked at her with great approval, and told her vehemently she was going to do a great job.

Travis: And she said, "Someday, I'm gonna name a place in a whole like continent thing that I take over—"

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: "— after you."

Teresa: I don't know if she said that right then, but.

Travis: Maybe not then, but she thought about it.

Teresa: She definitely thought about it. And so this was practically Victoria's first friend.

Travis: Mm.

Teresa: And over the years, the Prime Minister became a father figure as well as a dear and trusted friend. She wrote that he had a great sense of humor, which was her favorite quality about him, because he could make her laugh despite the enormous pressure.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: That she was constantly under. They spent hours doing jigsaw puzzles together and taking long walks, and just talking and having tea, like all these kind of things, right? As happens, eventually Lord Melbourne was voted out as Prime Minister, because that's how the things work, right?

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: And Victoria was devastated. If you read any of her journals at the time, you would assume that Lord Melbourne had died.

Travis: Oh boy.

Teresa: [chuckles] Instead of just lost his job.

Travis: I bet it was easier though. I could see where it would be easier to find time as the Queen to hang out with the Prime Minister.

Teresa: Yeah. That's true.

Travis: Than it was to just be like, "This is my friend, Mel." I know his name isn't Mel Bourne.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: But that— I don't know his first name. So I went with Mel.

Teresa: I mean.

Travis: Mel Melbourne, maybe?

Teresa: Mel. [chuckles]

Travis: I don't know.

Teresa: Probably not, okay. But next in Prime Minister comes Robert Peale, who as often happens, the pendulum swings the other way.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Did not like Victoria. And likewise, daddio, right? She did not like him.

Travis: Sorry, what was that?

Teresa: Likewise, daddio.

Travis: That's not.

Teresa: Yeah, it is.

Travis: Oh babe.

Teresa: That's a thing.

Travis: Oh babe.

Teresa: A thing.

Travis: Likewise, daddio?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: What's it a thing from?

Teresa: Beatniks.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: They said that.

Travis: No I know they said, "daddio," they said, "Likewise, daddio"?

Teresa: I'm sure they did.

Travis: It's just you said it and I've known you for many, many years and never—

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: — heard you say it before.

Teresa: Maybe you haven't been listening.

Travis: No, I'm—

Teresa: I'm a real beatnik.

Travis: Mm.

Teresa: Is what I'm saying. [giggles]

Travis: I don't know that. It sounded weird coming out of your mouth too. Try it again.

Teresa: No.

Travis: Give me a more natural— Okay.

Teresa: Nope.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: You don't get that. He commanded that she fire her ladies in waiting because they were not the same political party that he was.

Travis: Okay, no?

Teresa: And she said, "Nope."

Travis: "I'm the... Queen?"

Teresa: And refused to so wholeheartedly that Robert Peale finally resigned altogether, in what became known as "The Bedchamber Crisis."

Travis: Wow.

Teresa: Yeah. Different kinda crisis.

Travis: Wild, man. Wait, of— Because— Just because she was like, “I’m doing this.”

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: “And you smell bad, get out of here.”

Teresa: [chuckles] Like, “You don’t know me,” right.

Travis: Yeah, okay.

Teresa: Okay, so this newfound independence as Queen also... let her get... completely out from under the thumb of her mother.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Because she banished them.

Travis: Wooooah.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: To the Phantom Zone?

Teresa: Oh, I mean, out of the palace, for sure.

Travis: Oh okay, yeah.

Teresa: I mean, they’re not allowed near her. And—

Travis: That’s so wild, `cause like it’s so interesting. I think that this says a lot about her character, at least a quarter of her, `cause you gotta think there is a different type of person who spends their whole life, from like childhood, being molded and shaped, and sounds like like emotionally, you know—

Teresa: Manipulated.

Travis: — manipulated.

Teresa: At least.

Travis: At least, at the very least. And then reaches this point and does not know how to operate without that, right? Because they've been so stunted in their emotional and whatever growth that they're like, "I hate that these people do this, but I also don't know how to operate without them." Which I'm sure is what her mom and Conroy were going for.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And then for her to be like, "Alright, peace!"

Teresa: Yup.

Travis: "Deuces!"

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Right, is like they must've been shocked, they must've been flabbergasted.

Teresa: It didn't stop Conroy from attempting to stay close to power.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: He even went directly to Lord Melbourne at the time, swearing up and down that the young queen had promised him a pension of £300 a year. And he told the Prime Minister that, you know, he felt he had right to lands and a title and a seat at court and all this stuff. But you know, Lord Melbourne was firmly—

Travis: Yeah man.

Teresa: — in Victoria's corner, and—

Travis: That's her BFF.

Teresa: And while he was initially swayed... He... quickly rescinded. I mean, as soon as Victoria banished Conroy from her sight.

Travis: Yeah man, right.

Teresa: Yeah. He did reconvene with Duchess of Kent, but you know, they didn't plan for what happens next.

Travis: No, they weren't ready for this— Wait, what happened next.

Teresa: Albert.

Travis: I know this guy.

Teresa: Yeeeeeeeah.

Travis: I've heard about this guy.

Teresa: The pair met on Victoria's 17th birthday, and so this— back up just a little bit, right. Back up to 17th birthday.

Travis: [imitates rewinding sound effect] Bip!

Teresa: Victoria wrote in her journals how attractive he was, and how nervous he made her. And we've talked a little bit about this.

Travis: We did a whole episode, we— Maybe two. We've talked about it a lot. You don't say a little bit.

Teresa: [giggles]

Travis: We've talked about it a lot!

Teresa: She wrote about how handsome—

Travis: Okay, yeah, we get it.

Teresa: His hair and his eyes and his smile. [giggles] And his teeth, his countenance, all of that stuff, right? October 1839. Victoria proposed to Albert.

We've also talked about this, it was kind of like a loophole in the rules, right. So you couldn't... Nobody else could propose to a monarch at the time, but there wasn't any rules about who the monarch could marry, right.

Travis: Yeah. And also nothin' that said a dog can't play basketball. And that's how was got Queen Air Bud!

Teresa: [giggles] So when she proposed, it was a—

Travis: Sorry, yeah.

Teresa: It was a—

Travis: I was picturing it, I got very excited about a dog queen, go on.

Teresa: It was an expected kind of scandal, does that make sense?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Where they were like, "Oh, a woman proposing, how scandalous," but it was like literally the rules.

Travis: That's what it was gonna be, yeah.

Teresa: It was what it was supposed to be.

Travis: That's— It's— It happens a lot today, right, where you see somebody and everybody's like, "I know that these people, they've been hangin' out a lot together."

Teresa: [giggles]

Travis: "And now we're just waitin' for that picture," right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: "We're just waitin' for it." And then it's like, "Yeah man, we all knew it was coming," but it's fun. It's not fun. I don't mean that.

Teresa: Right. No.

Travis: I don't like basking in people's personal lives.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: I literally could not care less.

Teresa: And he accepted, they were madly in love. Then they started planning their royal wedding. They did spend a lot of their engagement separate.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Because Albert had a lot of stuff to wrap up in Germany, but they wrote a lot of love letters.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Which we detailed in the— one of our Valentine episodes. They are perfect.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: It's beautiful. And so they wed on February 10th 1840, in the Chapel Royal of St James Palace in London. It was everything.

Travis: It was a to do.

Teresa: It was everything.

Travis: A to do, one might say.

Teresa: There were trumpets, there were distinguished guests.

Travis: I wish you just stopped there, if you were just like, "It had everything. Trumpets."

Teresa: [chuckles] There was cake.

Travis: Mm.

Teresa: Which—

Travis: This is where we get the wedding cake that we now think of, with the multi-tiered white. It was like structural where it like looked like a

thing. I think— Was this the first time they had the little people on top?
Or is that—

Teresa: I don't know.

Travis: Or maybe that—

Teresa: I'm not quite sure about that.

Travis: But when we think of a multi-tiered wedding cake, this is where that idea kind of originated.

Teresa: That's where it is. It was fruit cake, and it weighed 300 pounds. It was enormous.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: There are pieces of it that survived til today.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And this is where—

Travis: Well, survived.

Teresa: Well, I mean—

Travis: It's not like they're thriving, you know what I mean?

Teresa: No, they exist.

Travis: Like that's the same as like mummified bodies still exist today.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: But I wouldn't be like, "There are Egyptians— There are Egyptian queens that survived til today."

Teresa: This is where we get that white dress. It was more traditional at the time for brides to wear colorful gowns with gold or silver embroidery.

But since white silk was very easily damaged, the Queen was like, “I wanna show everybody how cool and awesome and wealthy I am.”

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: So we do the white silk.

Travis: And that’s when royalty and rich people started showing off. She had so much stuff—

Teresa: Oh, she got the whole— Nope. So historians don’t agree as to whether she was like the first one to wear the white dress, but she was the one who made it look good, right?

Travis: Well the thing is is a lot of this stuff, ‘cause we talked about this with the Christmas episode too. It’s not always that she was the first, it’s that she popularized it.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Right, that she became— Which we see a lot today, right? Of like think about the people where like this thing exists, but if they wear it to this thing, if they’re photographed doing it, sales go through the roof, right?

Teresa: Right. Right.

Travis: Like that’s what we’re talking about.

Teresa: Exactly. And so... here we have the whole setup of everything that would make Queen Victoria primed into the queen that we all know of from history. And tune in next week because we’ll be... charging right ahead.

Travis: Sure. We wanna say thank you to our researcher Alex, without whom we could not do the show. Wanna say thank you to our editor Rachel, without whom we could not do the show. Thank you to you for listening. We could do this show without you. But that would be weird.

Teresa: And we wouldn’t.

Travis: And we'd be sad, after a while.

Teresa: No, we wouldn't.

Travis: No, we wouldn't.

Teresa: I wouldn't.

Travis: We could!

Teresa: We— But why?

Travis: But why. We also wanna say go check out, if you're listening to this before the end of May, mcelroymerch.com. There's a bunch of stuff there. It'll still be there next month too.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: But in May, the merch proceeds are going to World Central Kitchen, and then it'll be going somewhere else in June. But right now, World Central Kitchen, 10% of all proceeds going there.

Also, you're going to be listening to this on Friday, so thank you to everybody who showed up for the Tacoma and Vancouver show. We're recording this on Monday, so man I hope people show up or this is gonna be a weird thing to put out.

Teresa: A few people will—

Travis: [sighs]

Teresa: — for sur, one hundo percent, show up.

Travis: I hope that's true. June 21st, *My Brother, My Brother And Me* is going to be at Kansas City, Missouri. June 22nd, *My Brother, My Brother And Me* is going to be in St Louis. June 23rd, *My Brother, My Brother And Me* is going to be in Tysons, Virginia. You can get those tickets on sale now at bit.ly/mcelroytours for tickets and more information. 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.

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 continually taking your topic submissions, your questions, your idioms, whatever. You can email us shmannerscast@gmail.com, and say hi to Alex, 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: [in a posh English accent] Manners, shmanners. Get it.

[theme music plays]

Maximum Fun.
A worker-owned network...
Of artist-owned shows...
Supported directly by you.