

Shmanners 430: Bram Stoker

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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, dearrrr.

Travis: Cold out there today.

Teresa: It is a little chilly in Cincinnati today, yes.

Travis: A little chilly, there was ice upon our vehicle.

Teresa: Oh!

Travis: Just cubes of it.

Teresa: [laughs] Somebody dumped out their ice coffee.

Travis: Somebody dumped a— their slushie on there.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Uh... That got you, nice.

Teresa: It did.

Travis: Happy Halloween everyone.

Teresa: Happy Halloween.

Travis: I mean Halloween season.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Most wonderful time of the year. Oh, I wish it could last all year. We're talking about today one Bram Stoker.

Teresa: Mmm.

Travis: Brahm?

Teresa: Is it "Brahm?"

Travis: Brahm. Bram?

Teresa: I think it might be Bram.

Travis: And we were talking just before we hit record.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: It's short, my wife has informed me, for Abraham, Abraham Stoker. And then we were trying to extrapolate from that if it would be Bram or Brahm. Except, I've realized that in order for it to work, and I know how his name's spelled, if it's short for "A-bra-ham."

Teresa: Uh-huh.

Travis: Then his name would be spelled B-R-A-H-A-M. Bra— Then with would be "Braham." A-bra-ham. But there's also the first A in there, A-bra-ham. So is it B-R-A, cut out the second H-A, leave the M, Bram? Or Brahm, A-bra-ham. Is it Brahm—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Or is it you're cutting out— You've got the B and the R, you cut out the first A and the H, then it's "Bram." Oh, think about it, folks, twistin' your beans out there.

Teresa: Oh boy.

Travis: Your noodles are all baked.

Teresa: I'm gonna say Bram.

Travis: Bram, yeah me too, I mean that one's good. I think— Isn't there a character in *Headless Horseman* named Brahm?

Teresa: Oh...

Travis: That's like the love— Who's the like opponent to Ichabod Crane, who's the one that like is, you know, the bully?

Teresa: The Biff Tanner?

Travis: But I think that, in that case, I think it is B-R-O-M.

Teresa: Yes, I believe you are correct.

Travis: Okay. Okay.

Teresa: Here's the thing, if you, dear listener, like... *Twilight*, if you like Ann Rice novels.

Travis: If you like pina coladas.

Teresa: And if you love the goths, if you are a goth, I think that you need to pay a little attention to Bram Stoker.

Travis: He did not invent vampires.

Teresa: No, he did not.

Travis: It's important to note, Abraham Stoker.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: Having such a hard time not saying "Stroker," I'm gonna work so hard folks not to do it. If you catch me doin' it, no you didn't. And— But he didn't invent— He didn't even invent *Dracula*, did he?

Teresa: No, the vam— Well, he did not invent Vlad Dracul, right?

Travis: Okay, yes.

Teresa: So the vampire myth has been around for hundreds of years, and particularly thrived during the Middle Ages.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Because... one of the symptoms of plague is bleeding mouth lesions.

Travis: Listen. Folks, let's get a little gory for a moment. Can I share some of the things I know? About vampire myths.

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: Thank you very much. When we talk about staking a vampire, do you know why that is?

Teresa: It's to keep them—

Travis: Well, play along with me.

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: Well [sighs]

Teresa: Do I know what it is? Is that what you're asking me?

Travis: Yeah, but I want you to pretend like you don't know what it is, 'cause I know I've told you before.

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Okay. [stiffly] No.

Travis: Thank you very much.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Acting degree paying off. So, that was when they— Because this was plague, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And you talk about the bleeding mouth lesions. So someone would die, right? And then someone else would get sick, and they'd be like, "Oh." In their brains, right, they didn't know about like germs, and so they connected of like, "This is some kind of curse being passed from person to person, right?"

So they dig up, because of vampire ideas, right? And they're like, "This person's a vampire, they're getting up from their grave, prowling the streets and attacking people," right? In their sleep or whatever. So they would dig them up, and the bodies would have swollen, right from...

Teresa: Decomposition.

Travis: Decomposition, right? And kinda moved around sometimes there, and rigor mortis and stuff like that. And so they were like, "We need to pin them down in their graves," and that was why you drove the stake through.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Not to kill a vampire, but to keep the vampire pinned down inside their coffin.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And another reason was part of decomposition, your gums recede.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Right? So when they would dig these people up and look— it would look like their teeth had grown, but it was that their gums had receded away from their teeth, making it look more violent.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Totes.

Travis: And you know about the mirrors?

Teresa: Didn't—

Travis: I know you do 'cause I've told you.

Teresa: No, I don't recall.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: Please enlighten me again.

Travis: Now was that acting?

Teresa: [coyly] You'll never know.

Travis: Ahhh! So, it was because the reflective surfaces of mirrors used to be made of the like painted silver. So that was the— where the idea of like, "Oh, vampires can't see their reflection," 'cause it's silver and silver is like this pure metal. For some reason, silver became like the pure metal associated with like the moon.

Teresa: Mm.

Travis: Which is where werewolf, the idea of like silver hurts them, 'cause silver is associated with the moon, and it's like like to like kind of thing.

Teresa: Oh okay.

Travis: Kind of that sort of like we think about the medicine can be the poison or the cure, depending on the does.

Teresa: Yeah, yeah.

Travis: It's that kind of idea of like, "They're vulnerable to the moon because they're controlled by the moon, and silver is of the moon so we'll use that." And so mirrors were like the backs of glass painted silver, and so it was this purified thing, so it wouldn't show vampires.

Teresa: Mmm!

Travis: Was why that idea developed.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Now—

Teresa: And then that's why you couldn't— Could you kill a vampire with a silver bullet? Or is that—

Travis: You can kill most things with a silver bullet.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: I mean silver's not great for vampires, it just depends. This is the thing though, and I'm sure we'll get into this with Bram.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Is like there's... Up til basically Bram, there wasn't a like, "Oh, here's the eight things—"

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: "— you know, to kill and stuff a vampire."

Teresa: Yeah, well—

Travis: It was all different depending on what culture you belonged to and stories your parents had told you, you know, what you had heard in your village, that was your kind of vampire myth.

And there were vampires in like so many different— Or maybe not called that, but different versions of that rise from the dead and drink blood across like all cultures.

Teresa: Totally. There's another thing that contributed to the rise of vampirism in— or the quote "vampirism" in the Middle Ages. There's a blood disorder known as porphyria, which causes severe skin blisters when the patient is exposed to sunlight.

Travis: Mm.

Teresa: Right, and not only that but apparently ingesting blood could temporarily relieve certain symptoms of porphyria.

Travis: Well did it have to do with iron? Was that it? Was it an iron deficiency?

Teresa: No, not necessarily.

Travis: I'm just trying to think of why consuming blood would help, and if it was a vitamin deficiency or something. Blood is pretty rich in vitamins, I mean.

Teresa: I— Yeah.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And iron.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Do you wanna hear if I were to create vampire myth, the two things that I would do?

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: If I ever write. One, the reason— This is an idea I had— Hi everybody, don't steal these. But you can if you want to, I don't care, they're good ideas.

That the problem with like, “Why can’t you see ‘em in a mirror? Why can’t they show up in photographs? Why does the sun hurt them?” Something about their skin lacking like the protective stuff to stop UV radiation.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: So basically light just permeates them, cuts right through them kind of idea. And so they don’t show up in mirrors, they don’t show up in photos and stuff, because light doesn’t reflect off of them.

Teresa: Well then how can we see them?

Travis: Well it’s a myth.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: It’s magic, like I’m not gonna explain that.

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: Don’t worry about that part.

Teresa: Okay. [chuckles]

Travis: But also the reason they have to drink blood, and this is the one that makes the most sense to me, is that they don’t breathe, their lungs don’t function.

And so if they need oxygen, right, oxygenated blood to like heal and function and move, they would need to oxygenate their blood somehow, and so they need to drink oxygenated blood from people that breath.

Teresa: Huh.

Travis: That, like I’m saying, this is not— Hey, I can’t stress this enough folks, me saying “This is the truth about vampires and how they work.”

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: I’m saying if I was doing my own version of a vampire story.

Teresa: Okay, yeah.

Travis: That I think would be how I would hand wavey explain it.

Teresa: Yeah, sometimes I feel like it's— a lot of this lore is convenient when it's convenient, right?

Travis: Yeah. Of course.

Teresa: Like we watch the *What We Do In The Shadows*, right?

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: And at one point, Nandor goes up into space.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And he's fine because he doesn't breathe, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Vampires are undead, they don't need bre— to breathe. But then I feel like at one point somebody starts drowning... And if you don't breathe then you can't really drown.

Travis: You get a tummy full of water? I don't know, yeah, it all—

Teresa: And then there's like... It makes sense that a vampire doesn't breathe, that's why they can sleep in a coffin.

Travis: There was one I saw—

Teresa: And that's why they can be underground forever.

Travis: Hey, we're gonna get to Bram Stoker in a second.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: But first, one of my favorites, I was watching the *Castlevania* anime, and at one point they were talking about like a cross-shaped sword. And somebody was like, "Okay cool, but what if you're like in

India, and you're up against like a vampire who doesn't care about like Christian stuff?"

And it's like— And I believe if I remember correctly, the explanation is vampires get confused by geometric shapes, but said in a completely like, "This is true" way.

Teresa: Huh.

Travis: And so it's the angles or whatever. But I like in *The Dresden Files* that the explanation is it's not about the reaction of the vampire to the symbol, but the faith of the wielder in the symbol.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: So it being this thing of protection and faith, so like in... *Dresden Files* he uses a pentagram, because as like a wizard and a belief in this thing and the power of that, like that's his... focus symbol for faith.

Teresa: So it's about protection instead of repelling.

Travis: Yes, exactly.

Teresa: Yeah. That makes sense. I don't understand the compulsion to count things though, that seems weird to me.

Travis: But it is my favorite thing.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: This idea of— It's maybe one of the greatest punchlines you can use if you're writing a vampire thing, of like, "And now I'm gonna spill some rice," and they're like, "[sighs] Okay. One two three four five six seven eight nine ten tw— Did I count that one?"

Teresa: Okay. Hey, let's talk about Bram Stoker.

Travis: Okay. Right.

Teresa: He—

Travis: That— What the episode's about, right.

Teresa: He was born near Dublin, November 8th.

Travis: [gasps] Really?

Teresa: Yeah, 1847.

Travis: That's my birthday.

Teresa: That is your birthday, and Justin's birthday, and my sister's birthday.

Travis: Small world. Actually small calendar I guess would be—

Teresa: I mean there's only so many.

Travis: I mean there's only so many days and billions of people.

Teresa: He was the third of seven children, and as far as his childhood goes, things were not so great. Up until the age of seven, he was pretty sick all the time, and spent either all of his time like inside or actually completely bedridden.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: It was clear that although his body was weak, his mind was willing, and he was very good at like making up stories and had a very active imagination and a curious mind.

Outside of his own health issues, the world he was born into was not so great, because of the Great Famine, which we've talked about, where England exploited Ireland's natural bounty, leaving their people to starve, right?

Travis: Mm-hmmmm.

Teresa: Luckily, his family was relatively well-off, which allowed them to survive the famine. But I mean you could not be alive in Ireland at that time and not understand what was happening, right?

And so one of the kind of like pervasive... I wouldn't say tales or like stories, but just some of the things that were talked about a lot in his family were the cholera epidemic of 1832, because it seemed very applicable to the current situation, right.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Lots of people dying of something that could largely have been prevented.

Travis: Which is still a thing that people do now. I mean, how often do we have some kind of economic downturn and people immediately start referencing like the Great Depression.

Teresa: Right, exactly.

Travis: And yeah.

Teresa: Exactly. So obviously, he needed to be like... entertained a little bit while he was in bed being sick, so—

Travis: This is a thing we hear about a lot, by the way, that ends up with spooky goth writer kids.

Teresa: Mm-hmm, yeah yeah.

Travis: Where it's just like, "Well they were in bed a lot and they were laid up on this thing, and so they got told a lot of stories."

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And then they wrote spooky goth things.

Teresa: Exactly, and his mother was very good at talking to him about like specifically Irish legends and folklore.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: So like the dark Irish folklore and the difficult historical times kind of like churned in his young imagination. And it's possible some of his medical treatments, such as like bloodletting.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: Played a role in his gothic storytelling prowess.

Travis: Well yeah, bloodletting, spooky. [chuckles] That's exactly it.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: It's weird to see your own blood outside your body.

Teresa: Indeed.

Travis: Yeah, it's not supposed to be there.

Teresa: However.

Travis: That blood's supposed to stay inside your body.

Teresa: He recovered, he became a strapping young man.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: Quite athletic, with flaming red hair. And—

Travis: Really?!

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I don't picture that. I picture it now that you've said it, but man, I think up til now, subconsciously I had an image of Edgar Allen Poe in my head.

Teresa: Mmm.

Travis: That's just—

Teresa: That's a different person.

Travis: Yeah, well I know it's a different person.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I don't mean like I was picturing Edgar Allen Poe and be like, "I think that's him," I was sitting there like I had a similar image to Edgar Allen Poe.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: Of like a gothic lad with like dark hair—

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: — and like pale complexion, sunk eyes.

Teresa: And he probably was pale.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Because he was Irish, but—

Travis: And had red hair.

Teresa: But he did have red hair.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: He had a reputation at Trinity College, where he attended, for being a quite a stellar student athlete.

Travis: [surprised] Really?

Teresa: Apparently.

Travis: He was a goth jock.

Teresa: I know, he was a talented rower and rugby player. Also, rings and trapeze?

Travis: So he sounds like a goth dreamboat.

Teresa: A little bit.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Kinda cool, kinda random, that's alright. He graduated from Trinity with a degree in science and mathematics in 1870, but also took a lot of courses of history and oratory. He joined the Irish Civil Service after and became Inspector of Petty Sessions, which means...

Travis: What?

Teresa: I know.

Travis: He liked gossip.

Teresa: No. [chuckles]

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: Which means he travelled to different— What?

Travis: I was just saying, if you wanna have a euphemism for like getting together with your friends and gossiping about people.

Teresa: Petty sessions?

Travis: Calling them “petty sessions” is pretty good.

Teresa: He travelled a lot— around to different local magistrates and made sure that everyone was doing the laws, like behaving by the book. So like he was kind of like the... the rule keeper for all of the like legal sessions.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: He used a lot of his free time to write, and we know this because in the 1870s he managed to publish a few short stories that received some moderate success. We've got *The Crystal Cup* in 1872, and *The Chain of Destiny* in 1875.

Travis: Okay sorry, *The Crystal Cup* and *The Chain of Destiny*... is some of the most like... I'm trying to think of what exactly it evokes in me,

'cause it's both like stuff you would find in like *EverQuest* and *World of Warcraft*, or like what would be the subtitle on like *Indiana Jones* novels.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: You know? Like this idea of like that's not what I would've expected him to write, you know what I— He's doin' *D&D* quests over here.

Teresa: [chuckles] And then 185, he published his first novel, *The Primrose Path*, which was serialized in an Irish magazine actually called *The Shamrock*.

Travis: Yeah it was.

Teresa: [chuckles] Yeah it was. Those did okay. It was fine, right? It's a melodrama about an Irish carpenter who succumbs to alcoholism after moving to London to work at a theater. It does have a slight "I hate England" vibe to it.

Travis: Nice.

Teresa: Which I think, given his circumstances—

Travis: Listen, if you're listening, England, I don't hate you. I don't have you, individuals. But... there's some stuff in there [chuckles] to not like!

Teresa: There's a lot of stuff in a lot of places.

Travis: And I say that as an American, we can identify that here as well.

Teresa: We can identify that here. So by the end of 1870s, he expanded into non-fiction writing as well. He wrote a handbook for his own job, we've all been there, right?

Travis: Oh, nice.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: He wrote a handbook for his own job.

Teresa: *Duties of the Clerks of Petty Sessions* in 1879.

Travis: Wouldn't it be great if you got asked to write a handbook for your own job, and you just like worked in some like extra breaks.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And like, "It's your job as the Head of Petty Sessions or whatever to definitely leave early from work. If you don't leave early from work every day, you're gonna get in trouble."

Teresa: Mm-hmm. Okay, so after that... like kinda mini career, he moved on to the next career, which was where he... actually landed a side gig as a critic, a theatre critic for *The Dublin Mail*.

And it was very successful, he was a great writer. And... he wrote an article specifically defending Walt Whitman's poetry collection *Leaves of Grass*.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Which was facing some criticism for its homoerotic themes, right. Bram Stoker was like, "Hey, I got this," and that got back to Whitman, who was like, "You know what? I like you, Bram."

Travis: Best friends. [imitates spitting sound effect]

Teresa: And then the pair of them had the chance to meet and became lifelong friends.

Travis: Yes, I love this. I like nothing more than finding out that real-life people were real-life friends. Like unfortunately didn't end well, but knowing that like Harry Houdini and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle were like best buds for a while.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Makes me really happy. There's also a story about Rachmaninov that I can't remember who the other person is, but Rachmaninov found out like this other composers like somebody liked honey, so he just like showed up at this dude's door at like two o'clock in the morning or

something with a big vat of honey, and was like, "I would like to be friends with you."

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: And the guy was like, "You're very weird, let's do it."

Teresa: I think that's how they do it.

Travis: Yeah. [imitates spit sound effect]

Teresa: So... a little later, he would also become involved with Oscar Wilde.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: He and Oscar Wilde were involved in a kind of love triangle with the woman who would later become Stoker's wife, Florence Balcombe. There's like a little love triangle in there.

Travis: I love that.

Teresa: Which lots of people think is probably sort— like the inspiration, or at least like an example, from his true life because in *Dracula* there's love triangle.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I mean... Are we talking about the one which vampire— in which *Dracula* is like thralling a woman?

Teresa: No.

Travis: Okay. Am I thinking of the play?

Teresa: I think you are.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: [giggles]

Travis: I always forget there's another dude.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: [chuckles] In the actual story, 'cause in the play, he's not in the play by Steven Dietz, which is the one I've seen the most. And I've read *Dracula*, but I get them confused.

Teresa: Yeah. It's been a while. Alright, so shortly after the wedding, Bram whisked Florence off to London, where he found a gig working for a very famous actor, Henry Irving.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: He was very favorably reviewed by Stoker many times, and so they were eager to meet, and then they became friends and eventually, Irving offered him the job of his manager.

Travis: Okay. This is a lot of jobs and a lot of hats, and none of them have written *Dracula* yet.

Teresa: Not yet.

Travis: I noticed. Okay.

Teresa: They worked together for a long time, managing not only Irving's career but also the Lyceum Theatre. And Brahm... Bram, I'm doing it again.

Travis: It doesn't—

Teresa: What's his name? Named his only child after him.

Travis: Huh.

Teresa: Yeah. Irving Noel.

Travis: That's good, that's a good name.

Teresa: So. It was at the birth of his son—

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: — that it inspired Stoker to get back to writing, and so three years after his birth, he wrote *Under the Sunset*, which is a collection of children's tales, right?

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Next he wrote *The Snake's Pass*, which tells the story of a young English boy on an adventure through Ireland.

Travis: And then he wrote Paul Rieser's *Parenthood*.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: A hilarious tale of being a parent.

Teresa: No.

Travis: No.

Teresa: While writing that story, because they— the story of *The Snake's Pass* is to find the treasure hidden by Saint Patrick.

Travis: Sure, yeah.

Teresa: That is when he starts delving into the supernatural themes.

Travis: And that's why he wrote the show *Supernatural*.

Teresa: No. That's— And next is *Dracula*.

Travis: But first! A word from some other MaxFun shoows!

[transition music plays]

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[pause]

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[pause]

Travis: [in a Dracula voice] Welcome back to our episode about Bram Stoker. Ah-ah-ah.

Teresa: [giggles]

Travis: [in a Dracula voice] Tell me. Tell me, Teresa.

Teresa: So at—

Travis: [in a Dracula voice] He wrote a story about me, did he not?

Teresa: Yes, he did.

Travis: [in a Dracula voice] I am Dracul.

Teresa: But what's the name of— You sound like Boris.

Travis: [in a Dracula voice] I am— No, Boris—

Teresa: From *Vampirina*.

Travis: [in a Dracula voice] Boris is a lot softer and higher.

Teresa: [chuckles] Oh.

Travis: [in a Dracula voice] Dracula is down here.

Teresa: Oh, Dracula is down there.

Travis: [in a Dracula voice] And much scarier.

Teresa: [chuckles] Okay.

Travis: [in a Dracula voice] But the trolls are in the Fangbowl Championship, it's the biggest game of the year. [normal] As voiced by James Van Der Beek.

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Which sounds like a character from *Count Duckula*, doesn't it?

Teresa: [through laughter] A little bit.

Travis: Van Der Beek, doesn't that sound like James Van Der Beek would be like a duck—

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: — vampire hunter, I think.

Teresa: I think you're right. Okay.

Travis: It's a weird morning, go on.

Teresa: We have some idea about whom *Dracula* was based on, okay? So there's a little bit of Vlad the Impaler, right?

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: There's also Elizabeth Bathroy.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Who was famous for... like... wearing—

Travis: Yes, apocryphally famous.

Teresa: Yes, apocryphally famous for—

Travis: That— She didn't bathe in blood.

Teresa: — bathing in blood, but she didn't.

Travis: She didn't.

Teresa: That was the story meant to get her off of her land and duchies.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Anyway.

Travis: Much like we've talked about with... Winchester as well.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: This idea of like, "Oh, this woman has all this money, and guess what? She's... uh, crazy, so we should take that money away, right? It's totally justified, don't worry about it."

Teresa: Yeah. And there is a mention in the book specifically about Vlad Dracul the Third. But there's really only one person who we are absolutely certain... His friend Henry Irving.

Travis: It's based off of Henry Irving.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Now this is interesting because if I remember correctly, there's a shift in the imagery of vampires before this, where they were like a *Nosferatu*, 'scary, oooooo' kind of thing, right?

Teresa: Yeah, more bat like looking.

Travis: And then I think it was during the same night like *Frankenstein* was written or something, there was Lord Byron's doctor wrote, or started a vampire story where he based it— the vampire off of Lord Byron, if I remember correctly.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And that's where we started to get the image of a vampire not being this like scary, you know, gremlin-y monster, but rather like a handsome, gothic, you know, prince kind of deal.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And it's very funny to me it's like that was based off of like a relationship, friendship?

Teresa: Mm?

Travis: History will say they were friends. History will say they were roommates kinda deal. And now we have another one where it's like, "I'm gonna base it off my friend," probably because he was like, "Eventually he's gonna play it in a show," I bet.

Teresa: Maybe.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Irving and Stoker... So... They had a very successful working relationship. Stoker was very invested in making sure the Irving got the best shows and the best stuff, and like he was all into that. And Irving was very charismatic, right? He was a well-known actor, the type where he would walk onstage and people would applaud, right?

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: But Henry Irving likely had some sort of narcissistic personality disorder, because in more than one account... it is shown that he was extremely unappreciative of Bram's work, and was known by multiple people to kind of like suck all the positive energy from the room around him.

Travis: He was an energy vampire.

Teresa: A little bit, right. So he was known to be charismatic and lovely to admirers and critics, but then an absolute menace to the people in his personal life. There was definitely two sides to him. So then... there's a lot of... discussion about vampires as kind of a metaphor, right?

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: You talked about energy vampire, right? And... part of that might be a metaphor for also lust and seduction.

Travis: Oh sure, yeah.

Teresa: We know that Stoker was married, but also had outside marriage dalliances with men as well as women. We know this from like the letters he wrote to Walt Whitman, and so he was probably bisexual, but deeply closeted because homosexuality was illegal at the time.

So... do we maybe feel the kind of push and pull, the like... the draw to a very charismatic man who doesn't treat you well in *Dracula*? I think that we do.

Travis: Well, listen. Hey, listen. It's undeniably there. The motivations for it? History can guess. We can write, we can guess. But I think there's definitely something to be said of like here's this guy who has the thrall, right? And you're like, "I'm drawn to him, and I want to resist it," right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And I'm so... attracted to him. It must be something evil, something supernatural, drawing me to it because I wouldn't be drawn to him by choice, right? This idea I think that there is definitely an interpretation of that of like denying that that is for normal quote unquote "healthy" reasons.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And must be some dark magic drawing me in, right?

Teresa: And this kind of dark magic could also be related to this person. "I'm so attracted to them and they treat me so bad," right?

Travis: Yes. Mm-hmm.

Teresa: And here's the thing. When you picture Dracula, can you kind of describe his visage?

Travis: Cheek bones for days.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Um... Pale skin. Usually I picture him with like jet-black hair.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Piercing eyes.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Handsome. Befanged. Maybe a moustache? I'll leave that to you. Tall, imposing.

Teresa: What do you think of this?

Travis: That, well. Huh.

Teresa: I'm showing Travis a picture of Henry Irving, who is not unlike what you described.

Travis: Yeah definitely the piercing eyes, strong jawbone. I mean listen, if you take— Here's how I'll describe it, he looks like Christopher Lee. He's got that Christopher Lee-esque quality to him.

Teresa: Yeah, mm-hmm. Long face.

Travis: Uh-huh. That idea of like—

Teresa: Heavy brow.

Travis: Yeah, like definitely someone that like if he looked at you with that look, you would feel scared? But not in a "I am threat—" But more like, "I wanna impress this person," I think that's the vibe he's giving in that look, of like he has the face of someone you would want to impress, if that makes sense.

Teresa: Here he is in some acting garb with a goatee in the theatre.

Travis: Oh, that's Dracula.

Teresa: Yeah. I'm not sure what character he's playing in this picture that I've pulled up.

Travis: But he's got like a pointed Van Dyke goatee.

Teresa: Mm-hmm, and longer hair, and that heavy brow again. So... He probably was based a lot on Henry Irving.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And several historians agree.

Travis: Which isn't that weird.

Teresa: This isn't just me and Alex, this is historians, okay. [chuckles]

Travis: It would be weird if it was just you and Alex.

Teresa: [laughs] So here is what historian Louis S Warren wrote. "Scholars have long agreed that the keys to Dracula's tales' origins and meaning lie in the manager's relationship with Irving in the 1880s.

There is virtual unanimity on the point that the figure of Dracula, which Stoker began to write notes for in 1890, was inspired by Henry Irving himself. Stoker's numerous descriptions of Irving correspond so closely to his rendering of the fictional count that contemporaries commented on the resemblance."

Travis: Oh, even contemporaries did.

Teresa: Mm-hmm. But.

Travis: Interesting.

Teresa: "Bram Stoker also internalized the fear and animosity his employer inspired in him, making them the foundations of his gothic fiction."

Travis: So, what I was gonna say is it's not weird to base characters in your writing off of people you know, right? People do it all the time.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I've got characters in *Adventure Zone* that I've done that with, I've written some things where it's like, "Oh yeah, this way." I think it's notable because it sounds like it's a pretty one for one kind of takeaway, enough that when you put that out, people were like, "Is that John Irving?"

Teresa: "Mmmm?"

Travis: "Did you make that guy?"

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: Henry Irving, Henry Irving.

Teresa: Henry Irving.

Travis: Excuse me. John Irving wrote *Prayer for Owen Meany*, which I was telling you about the other day. But... Yeah, I think it's notable because it was like not a flattering thing.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Necessarily, where— Ah, I take that back. If someone— If I read... *Dracula*, and I was like, "Is this ba— Is this guy who's kind of like dark and charming and scary and powerful and threatening, is that me?"

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: And he's like, "Yeah," I would be like, "Oh my god, thank you."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: But I think that's probably why it wouldn't be based off of me. But I think it's notable because if I was gonna write something. And make a monstrous villain of the thing, I wouldn't base it off of like a friend, you know.

Teresa: Well a villain that you love to hate.

Travis: But that's what I'm saying is like I don't... I think it's notable, right? 'Cause remember, he named his son after this dude.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And also then made one of the most famous monsters in like monster, you know, fiction modelled after him. That's very interesting.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: It's a very dichotomous relationship.

Teresa: Well okay, so yes he modelled him off— after his friend, but a lot of the tropes that are prevalent in the story are not modelled after him, they're modelled after the way that people thought of vampires at the time.

Travis: Oh sure, absolutely. But I'm saying "I'm gonna model my friend and make this guy the person— Didn't model the hero."

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: "Of the story after him. But Dracula."

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Interesting.

Teresa: For example, there were some other well-known vampire fictions circulating. 1819, John Polidori introduced the idea of vampire being a wealthy and adoring aristocrat.

Travis: That's the one based off of Lord Byron.

Teresa: Yes, yes.

Travis: That Lord Byron I think went on to finish and publish, maybe, if I remember correctly. But.

Teresa: And then 1845, *Varney the Vampire* added the idea of—

Travis: Janet Varney the vampire.

Teresa: [chuckles] Of fangs and drinking from people's necks, which was not part of it before.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Right? And then we've got more vampiric texts, not *Dracula* specifically, but *Carmilla*, which is written by another Irishman, which gave them the power to kind of metamorphosize into animals.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Not necessarily bats at this point, but.

Travis: There was also wolves and.

Teresa: Yeah, and I've heard birds and things like that.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Also, this is the time when we're introduced to a Van Helsing type that hunts vampires, right?

Travis: That guy, he's a real Van Helsing type. It also should be noted, all of this is we're talking very European based.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Vampires. There is— When we talk about like the rice counting, and I think running water being a problem and stuff like that, a lot of that comes from Chinese vampire mythology. And I think... That's the only one I can speak of for certain. But there was vampire mythology that a lot of the stuff that we think of now from around the world.

Teresa: Yeah. And this idea of vampires luring and feasting as a metaphor for seduction.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Was also introduced in this time, which makes a lot of sense as far as like Victorian sensibilities and things like that.

Travis: And romanticism and stuff like that, yeah.

Teresa: Exactly, exactly.

Travis: When it goes from being like hunting, you know, to seduction, right. This idea of like, “prey” taking on a different meaning.

Teresa: And Stoker was like, “That’s great, I’ll take the lot.”

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: [chuckles] He wrote— He used everything, everything that he had ever heard about vampires is distilled into *Dracula*.

Travis: And it really is amazing, I mean not to jump ahead. Well, I don’t know, I think we’re there, how much of if you take a poll on the street, you know stopping people, “Tell me what you know about vampires. What kills vampires? What are vampires’ weaknesses?” that kind of thing.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: I’m gonna say 999 times of out a thousand, they’re gonna tell you something that Bram Stoker popularized, right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Not invented, right? Because a lot of this is, as we’re saying, is like a distillation of already pervasive like vampire ideas and everything.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: But like the staking through the heart, garlic, all of these things you know, like this was kind of a big pivot point for vampire mythology, where it started to codify like, “Yeah, this is how you stop a vampire.”

Teresa: Exactly. And in the same way, also his literary style wasn't like— He didn't invent it, but he did kinda make it famous.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: For example, Mary Shelley had used journal entries as a storytelling device in *Frankenstein*, but Stoker did something innovative by blending all perspectives from all of the characters. 'Cause the whole thing is written in— I'm gonna— I don't exactly know how to say it, epistolary style?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah, which is letters and journal entries and telegrams and transcripts and things like that, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So instead of like the normal narrative that we had come to kind of see in fictional writing, we've got all of these different styles.

Travis: Which means— goes such a long way for it to be scary.

Teresa: Totally.

Travis: Because you're write— you're reading it like it's a real... Like an account of a thing that happened, not just to some people, but to the people writing the thing.

Teresa: Like you would open up a case study type deal.

Travis: Right, you're getting a first person— I remember listening to *World War Z* for the first time when they did like a full at audiobook recording, and like you know, you have people reading the stories, and how terr— Like soul like crushing it was, because it felt so real to listen to these people recount this thing as if it had really happened to them.

Teresa: Mm-hmm, yeah.

Travis: And like this must've just gripped people, like you know like hearing the *War of the Worlds* broadcast, right? Reading this and being

like, "What if he really found these letters? This feels like something that would really happen."

Teresa: Yeah. A smash hit. Critical success. Everybody loved it. He was makin' all kinds of money, which is good because he had found himself in some financial troubles.

Travis: Sure he did.

Teresa: Yeah. You know.

Travis: Everything we've read so far, by the way—

Teresa: Bad investments and stuff.

Travis: — it starts to feel like... make up a story about a guy who would write a famous book. It's like, "Okay, he was sick as a kid. [chuckles] And then he had a bad boss. He worked as a critic for a while. Love triangle with another famous author."

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: It just starts to feel like, "Okay yeah, I get it."

Teresa: And he—

Travis: "Went into debt."

Teresa: — Stoker did realize that *Dracula* had some pretty fantastic theatrical potential. So before he wrote a proper theatrical adaptation, he used his own stage at the Lyceum to put up a public reading, which is genius because then that secures a stage copyright.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Right?

Travis: Brilliant.

Teresa: And he got Henry Irving to read *Dracula*.

Travis: Listen.

Teresa: The titular role.

Travis: Of course he did. I bet—

Teresa: Can you imagine?

Travis: I bet he loved it. I bet—

Teresa: You think so?

Travis: I would— If you have a narcissistic personality disorder as they theorize that he did. And you find out that Dracula's based on you. And then you get to read it, and like be known for it? Like yeah, I'm— I would bet a million doll hairs that this guy was like, "Bah dah bah bah bah, loving it."

Teresa: Accounts say the opposite.

Travis: [gasps] Then why did he do it?

Teresa: Well because Irving was his manager, and they recognized how like popular it was. Sorry, not Irving was his manager. Stoker was Irving's manager.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Is what I meant.

Travis: I just lost a million doll hairs.

Teresa: [chuckles] And would not stop talking to Stoker about how dreadful he thought the whole thing was.

Travis: Li— Okay, but listen. Ha ha ha, perhaps that was because Stoker was getting attention that he was not getting.

Teresa: It's possible.

Travis: And was getting more famous for this work that he did.

Teresa: Yeeeeeeah.

Travis: And he was like, “Oh,” and it had nothing to do with it— I— Listen, I still stand by it. I’m not ready to turn over my million doll hairs just yet. I’ll see once I get to Hell.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I’ll ask him.

Teresa: Slowly but surely, their relationship began to sour.

Travis: Good.

Teresa: And they kind of fell out of business together first, it would seem. Henry Irving’s son began to work at the Lyceum and Henry began to take his son’s advice over Stoker’s, and so eventually Irving sold the Lyceum, which Stoker had told him not to do.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And the company had to declare bankruptcy. 1905, Henry Irving suffered an onstage stroke.

Travis: Oh no.

Teresa: And died.

Travis: [gasps] He died onstage?

Teresa: I don’t think he died onstage, but the stroke was onstage.

Travis: I’m sure he would want us to say that he died onstage.

Teresa: Alright. Stoker was not mentioned at all in the will.

Travis: [gasps]

Teresa: They were friends and business partners for over 30 years. And nothing.

Travis: Okay. You— I'm just saying once again this is full-blown fanfiction interpolation, right. But you can see why that kind of bitterness from the narcissistic one towards Stoker has to do with him becoming more famous than him.

Teresa: Probably.

Travis: Right? Like that's the only thing that makes sense, that kind of falling out. When it's like— I'm just saying, that's what it reads to me.

Teresa: Stoker would go on to write a few more novels, but none would ever top the success of *Dracula*. It's usually assumed that his writing fell off a little bit when he suffered his own stroke in 1906.

Travis: Mm.

Teresa: In 1912, he passed under mysterious circumstances. Some attributed his complicated health, right. He had lots more strokes. Perhaps he was overworked. Perhaps he died of complications of syphilis.

Travis: Mm.

Teresa: Which was not uncommon at the time, especially since it was known that he had dalliances outside his marriage. But you know, I think that kinda adds to the mystery and the wonder, right.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And so we've mentioned it throughout this, there are countless adaptations and books and movies and stage plays. I am partial to the Gary Oldman *Dracula*.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: I like that one a lot.

Travis: I like the Steven Dietz stage play.

Teresa: Okay, yeah, that's a good one. "Let us be friends for all our lives."

Travis: "Let us be friends for all our lives."

Teresa: [chuckles] That's a very small quote from that. Sorry.

Travis: It's one of those random quotes that sticks in my head mostly from the actor who played it—

Teresa: Oh yeah.

Travis: — when we did it in *Shakespeare*, I just loved it. But also like *Castlevania*, I was very close to—

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I love *Castlevania*, I grew up playing it.

Teresa: We also love *What We Do In The Shadows*.

Travis: *What We Do In The Shadows*, which is— has so many. I mean it's obviously based off of the Stoker vampire ideal. A lot of stuff. Yeah.

Teresa: A lot of stuff. The legacy lives on, not only for the author but also the character.

Travis: One of my favorite references is in *The Dresden Files*, they talk about it, that there are different courts of vampires, and that the Black Court vampires are like the Stoker *Dracula* vampire. And that Stoker published *Dracula* as a how-to guide to kill the Black Court vampires.

Teresa: Hmm...

Travis: And that's why there are very few Black Court vampires anymore.

Teresa: Ohhh.

Travis: Is that that was specifically written and made as "Okay great, they're on the rise, we're gonna shut 'em down. Here you go."

Teresa: Cool.

Travis: “There’s an instruction manual.” Thank you everybody for listening. Thank you to Rachel for editing. We couldn’t do this without you. Thank you to Alex for researching, we really couldn’t do this without you. Thank you to Teresa for narrating.

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: Couldn’t do this without you. Thank you to you the audience for listening, and recognizing that Teresa is the expert and I’m not, so any historical facts I regurgitate—

Teresa: Ah! [chuckles]

Travis: — are fallible.

Teresa: And thank Travis for Travis, as usual.

Travis: Of course. And yeah, that’s—

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: It’s implied. It goes without saying. We’ve got— If you’re listening to this on Friday or Saturday or Sunday, we’ve got some live shows. *My Brother, My Brother And Me* is in Denver on the 18th, which if you’re listening to this on Friday’s tonight.

And then Phoenix the 19th and 20th, Saturday and Sunday, with *My Brother, My Brother And Me* and *The Adventure Zone*. If you have questions you wanna have answered at those shows, you can email mbmbam@maximumfun.org, and put the name of the city for the show that you’ll be at in the subject line.

And we’re also gonna be in Indianapolis and Milwaukee coming up at the beginning of November, and Dad and I are going to be at MCM London on the I think 25th and 26th. You can go to bit.ly/mcelroytours for all the ticket links and info and all that stuff there. 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 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, we are taking your topic submissions, your questions, your queries, your idioms. Please send those to shmannerstcast@gmail.com, and say hi to Alexx, because she reads every single one.

Travis: [in a Dracula voice] And that's gonna do it for us.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: [in a Dracula voice] Join us again next week.

Teresa: No RSVP required.

Travis: [in a Dracula voice] You've been listening to *Shmanners*.

Teresa: Manners shmanners, get it?

Travis: [in a Dracula voice] Ah ah ah ah ah.

[outro theme music plays]

[ukulele chord]

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