

## Shmanners 417: The Great Masculine Renunciation

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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:** I don't know why, but I feel like I said husband toast.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** I don't think—I think—husband... host.

**Teresa:** You didn't. I didn't hear husband toast.

**Travis:** You didn't? Okay, it just kind of felt like it ran together. Husband toast. His and hers toast. You know that that's a thing—oh. It, like, burns. His and hers [crosstalk].

**Teresa:** Oh, maybe.

**Travis:** That's gotta exist. I'm not creative enough to make that up the first person ever. How are you? How are you, my dove? How are things?

**Teresa:** Things—things are goin'. Things are goin' fine.

**Travis:** Okay. Which way are they going? Up or down, sideways, in a circle?

**Teresa:** I mean, [laughs] in a circle most days.

**Travis:** Spiraling.

**Teresa:** Spiraling most days. But, you know. It's going. How about you?

**Travis:** It's going, yeah. Everything hasn't come to a complete grinding halt, so that's nice.

**Teresa:** Yeah. Sometimes I feel like you put me on the spot 'cause you get to ask me how things are, and then I'm like, I have to think of something to say.

**Travis:** Oh, you don't! Oh, baby. I forget that this was your first day on Earth.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** When says "How are you?" You can just say like, "Doing great, how are you doing?"

**Teresa:** Well, but you keep looking at me.

**Travis:** Yeah!

**Teresa:** You just keep looking at me.

**Travis:** We're in a booth together! It's four foot by four foot booth. I can't— [crosstalk].

**Teresa:** You know what I mean. You know what I mean.

**Travis:** I don't. But I get it.

**Teresa:** You do!

**Travis:** I get it a little bit. Hi.

**Teresa:** Okay, hi.

**Travis:** I love you.

**Teresa:** Love you too.

**Travis:** What are we talking about this week?

**Teresa:** We are talking about the—the great... let me make sure. The great masculine renunciation.

**Travis:** Okay?

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** The, uh—so the... renu—renouncing of things.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** But what?

**Teresa:** Well, this is something that's actually pretty close to your heart.

**Travis:** Yeah! I'm excited! I'm abuzz with energy.

**Teresa:** Fashion.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** So, one of the things that you love to talk about is how when you go online for, like, men's fashion advice, right?

**Travis:** Oh my god, yes. Yes.

**Teresa:** What is the kind of thing that you see—

**Travis:** [simultaneously] A pea coat!

**Teresa:** —available to men?

**Travis:** Wear a pea coat! Hey, have you tried a pea coat? Hey. There was one one time where literally it said, "Have you tried a pl—like, a clean white t-shirt and jeans?" I'm like, "Yeah, man! Like, yeah, dude!"

And it's like, "Maybe a bold colored shirt." And it's, like, dark blue. And I'm like, okay? Cool?

"Have you checked out this plaid?"

"Yeah, man. Yeah."

**Teresa:** So it's just kind of, like, the sameness, right? It's the same everywhere.

**Travis:** Not just same, but understated, and, uh, I would say—sorry, fellas—bland.

**Teresa:** Mmm.

**Travis:** Right? Where it's like, a lot of muted colors, and not—like, linear patterns, and, uh, regular cuts. Like, there's nothing about it that's bold, or daring, or challenging. Um, like if you looked at, uh, you know, a jacket from the last 30 years, I've—

**Teresa:** Even longer, I would say.

**Travis:** Even longer. But I think you would have—

**Teresa:** Probably closer to 60 years.

**Travis:** And because—well, now here's the thing. If you're saying, like, "Well, what about, like, a starter jacket, or members only, or a windbreaker?"

Yeah, I understand. I'm talking about, like, suit jacket. Right?

**Teresa:** Yeah, right? Because as it comes to, like, okay, less formal wear, right? Casual knit type stuff. Sure, there's everything from, like, you know—like you're wearing right now, they would call a vest in the UK. It's a—it's a sleeveless shirt.

**Travis:** Athletic, sleeveless tee, yes.

**Teresa:** All the way up to, like, a, um, a sweater. Then you've got sweatshirts, you've got jackets, things like that. But as far as, like, "That person looks together" fashion, it's suits.

**Travis:** Yes. And that's the thing is like, when you—especially—and listen. I'm not saying there aren't fringe cases where you're like, "What about David Bowie's fa—" or whatever. Yes.

**Teresa:** We'll talk about that.

**Travis:** But what I'm talking about is like—go to, say, Wall Street. Any time from, like, 1980 to 2024, right? And, like, blindly land in one of those years, and tell me what year you're in just by looking at someone's suit, and you're not gonna be able to do it.

**Teresa:** There are people that can. There are very subtle changes in cuts and fits that wax and wane throughout the decades, especially in the 19th century, right?

**Travis:** Yes, but wax and wane. Not like—oh, I see how this style led to this style led to this style led to—when you think about, like, women's clothing, it's season to season.

**Teresa:** Yes, exactly.

**Travis:** And with men's clothing it's like, well, they—it was more like a pinstripe than a solid color that year.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** There was a lot more navy than black. It was, uh, darker greys were in. It's—

**Teresa:** The question we find ourselves asking is why? Why is it like this?

**Travis:** I assume homophobia.

**Teresa:** Um—

**Travis:** I assume that's in there. Uh, masculinity.

**Teresa:** I'm not saying that it isn't.

**Travis:** Toxicity.

**Teresa:** But what I'm saying is, it was a conscious decision by people in power to streamline the male look.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Okay. So...

**Travis:** That response was me trying to figure out why in my head.

**Teresa:** Yes, and I'm going to tell you. I'm going to tell you why. It is called, like I said, the great male renunciation, and it was a massive historical fashion phenomenon at the end of the 18th century, where a bunch of wealthy western men decided that they didn't want to have fun with clothes anymore.

**Travis:** Now, this is important to note, because this has not been forever.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** Right? We've talked about many times on this show before things like high heels, stockings, uh, makeup, uh, painted nails. I've already said high heels I think. But, like, things like that.

**Teresa:** Furs, jewelry, wigs, um, different headdresses and caps with feathers, also—

**Travis:** What one might call frippery.

**Teresa:** Frippery, indeed.

**Travis:** All of these things start—not all of them, but in most cases start as male fashion and make their way to female fashion. But they were all present for everyone during that time. And so this idea of like, traditional masculinity or traditional masculine dress or whatever is, like, as far as historically goes, very recent.

**Teresa:** Exactly. And, I mean, all you have to do is think about any kind of, like, Shakespearean play that you've been to see within the Shakespeare time period, right? Like, puffy pantaloons and codpieces and capes and all sorts of things.

**Travis:** Or if you've seen, like, Three Musketeers, Scarlet Pimpernel, anything during that time. Um, I mean, even getting into—we're definitely going a different way, but when you think about—who was the dude—Evander... Waller, the king of dudes was the one we talked about.

**Teresa:** Ah, yes. I remember that.

**Travis:** Um, and you know, there's just plenty of people who, like, their whole deal as a man was being a fashionable kind of clothes horse person. Uh, in the early, like, 1800s, basically 1700s to the early 1800s. And so you're saying end of the 1700s, which was the 18th century, a bunch of dudes were like, "This is exhausting." [laughs] Is that what it was?

**Teresa:** Well, so what happens is it is directly correlated with the Enlightenment, right?

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, so the Age of Enlightenment in Europe—European fashion is what we're talking about, in case it wasn't clear—is an intellectual and

philosophical movement that got rolling the 17th and 18th centuries, and it's this kind of boom of intellectualism that gives writers, and philosophers, and scientists kind of, like, the flipping of the switch that changed everything forever, right?

So we've got Voltaire, we've got John Locke, we've got Mary Wollstonecraft, Immanuel Kant, all these people, right? Um, and so with it brings new social and scientific and philosophical ideas.

People are beginning to discuss the tenets of liberty, and progress, and constitutional government, and formal separation of church and state. So, like, it's all of those things, right? That lead to the 19th century movements like socialism, and neoclassicism, and liberalism. They all trace back to this period in time.

**Travis:** Okay, but I'm having a hard time—it kind of—the only connection I can make without any further detail, right? This is just top of my head—kind of feels a little bit like a school dress code, right? Where they're like, "We want to make it a level playing field for everybody, so this is kind of our dress code thing."

But really what you're doing—and listen, I don't want to argue about dress codes, but I'm saying there's a little bit of limiting of self-expression in there, because you're like, in order to make it a level playing field, you have to kind of limit self-expression for people.

**Teresa:** That's interesting. It's not exactly what this movement was about.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** So one of the themes of the Enlightenment was rationalism, is the idea that pretty much is like the philosophy that decisions in life should be made using reason and not theological or emotional input, right? It was this think that, like, people should think instead of feel. People should make, like, rational decisions weighing pros and cons, right? Not because of things like traditional or religion, or, um—or other things, right? It was just like, use your brain to its utmost conclusion.

**Travis:** But feelings also come from your brain.

**Teresa:** I know, right?

**Travis:** Would be kind of my point.

**Teresa:** I think that in life we are starting to swing back the other way with the idea of emotional validation, and emotional intelligence, and things like that, right? We're swinging.

**Travis:** And just the basic idea that if doing something hurts someone and makes them upset, maybe that's worth considering before you do it.

**Teresa:** And so this was one of the ways that we enforce rule and order, right? One of the ways that we do that is through the gender binary, right? The idea of a gender binary.

**Travis:** The construct.

**Teresa:** The construct of the gender binary. So, like, using that binary idea to rationalize kind of, like, high thought being available only for men.

**Travis:** Okay. That's wild, though. 'Cause that's such a, uh, like... I'm trying to think—a catch-22, right? Of like, "We're gonna rationalize. We're gonna reason. Right? And not just base this off traditional thought processes. So women don't get to participate." Wait, hold on, wait! Wait! Weren't you listening? Weren't you listening to the thing you were just saying about rationalizing it? Maybe you should let anybody participate who is qualified to be part of the discussion.

"Like, okay, but... [laughs] that's not gonna be a woman." Okay, but how is that based on reason? "Well, uh, 'cause we reasoned it." Get out!

**Teresa:** Yeah. Exactly.

**Travis:** Oh... what a bunch of old stinkers.

**Teresa:** Women were frivolous and emotional, while men were rational and practical, right? And so, you know—

**Travis:** Well, with all the wars and whatnot.

**Teresa:** I suppose. I suppose. And it's pretty easy to dunk on these people.

**Travis:** And I will continue to do so! I like easy dunks! Lower the rim! I'll dunk with my feet flat on the floor, thank you very much.

**Teresa:** But there is a practical kind of leg to stand on for this, and that is the French revolution.

**Travis:** Okay. You know what? I can't wait to talk about the French revolution with you. But we will! Here's a word from another Max Fun show.

[theme music plays]

**John:** Hello, sleepyheads. Sleeping with Celebrities is your podcast pillow pal. We talk to remarkable people about unremarkable topics, all to help you slow down your brain and drift off to sleep.

For instance, the remarkable actor Alan Tudyk.

**Alan:** You hand somebody a yardstick after they've shopped at your general store. The store's name is constantly in your heart, because yardsticks become part of the family.

**John:** Sleeping with Celebrities, hosted by me, John Moe, on [Maximumfun.org](http://Maximumfun.org) or wherever you get your podcasts. Night night.

[music and ad end]

**Speaker 1:** The following are real reenactments of pretend emergency calls.

[ominous music plays]

**Speaker 2:** 911.

**Speaker 3:** [breathing heavily] My husband! It's my husband!

**Speaker 2:** Calm down, please. What about your husband?

**Speaker 3:** He—he loads the dishwasher wrong! Please help! Please help me! [sobbing]

[whoosh]

**Speaker 2:** Where are you now, ma'am?

**Speaker 4:** At the kitchen table. I was with my dad. He mispronounces words intentionally.

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[music and ad end]

**Travis:** Okay. *Viva la revolución*. No, I've messed it up. *Viva—*

**Teresa:** *Vive la—*

**Travis:** *Vive la révolution*.

**Teresa:** *Révolution*. There it is. Okay. So—

**Travis:** [unintelligible] Okay, go ahead.

**Teresa:** [laughs] This is a time where, uh, the haves and the have-nots, there is a gulf of divide between. And you can tell by looking at someone whether they are part of the bourgeoisie. Right?

**Travis:** Yeah. And ironically, the haves get cut in half.

**Teresa:** [laughs] They do. But—so all of those, like, the furs and the feathers and the frippery that we talked about earlier being part of men's fashion quickly fall out. Because—

**Travis:** It represents wealth.

**Teresa:** Exactly. It represents wealth, and so the working class people of France viewed the high class clothing as a symbol of that, right? And so there is—there's even a term called *sans culottes*, which—

**Travis:** Without pants?

**Teresa:** Yep, without britches.

**Travis:** Oh, without britches.

**Teresa:** Uh, as an insult to the working class men who can't afford the expensive silk breeches of the higher tax bracket, right? And so the revolutionaries started to dress themselves in direct opposition to what they saw as wealthy.

**Travis:** So like hippies in the '60s.

**Teresa:** A little bit, yeah. Um, the last nonviolent assembly of the French revolution was in June of 1792, and this is where the, like—the—what do they say? The road meets the—

**Travis:** The rubber meets the road?

**Teresa:** The rubber meets the road. And this is where they have decided that we are no longer emulating the fashion of the French, of the—of the wealthy.

**Travis:** Yeah, of the aristocratic class.

**Teresa:** Of the aristocrats.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** So, that's—that's where it is. And so this idea of, like, cosplaying as a monarch, right? To show your kind of stature, is completely flipped over.

**Travis:** It's like, imagine if someone was willing to pay, like, thousands of dollars for a purse because it had, like, a pattern printed on it that, like, matched the pattern of, like, really wealthy people.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** And so then you were—what was the purse? Did it have special features, or did it—no. It just had that pattern on it, so you would pay thousands and thousands of dollars just to be seen wearing that purse. Something like that?

**Teresa:** Something like that.

**Travis:** Okay, great. Go on.

**Teresa:** Um, and it wasn't just in France. In the United States at this time, deep in revolution ourselves, and—

**Travis:** Which one was that?

**Teresa:** What?

**Travis:** Which revolution? The American revol—

**Teresa:** The American revolution. [laughs quietly] Uh, the founding fathers began to abandon their own trappings of European monarchy. For example, this is when Benjamin Franklin stopped wearing his wig, because he felt that it was a hangover from the aristocracy.

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** And, you know, France is probably where he got that idea, because he was the ambassador to France.

**Travis:** Spent a lot of time there, yes.

**Teresa:** So now this great masculine renunciation declared it was time to abandon the finer trappings of fashion. This is where we get the dark colored or black clothing which is standard. High heels were abandoned as well.

**Travis:** Was it an impractical thing? Was it a showy thing? Was it a cost? All of the above?

**Teresa:** It was all of the above. It was deemed irrational. It was deemed extravagant. And it was deemed that this is not something that we aspire to any longer, right? All of the old business is out. New business is in.

**Travis:** I—listen. I am not an anthropologist. But I would love it if somewhere, someone has traced that concept, right? Like, the whole, like, uh, class divide between having fancy clothes and not having fancy clothes, and then not wanting to seem fancy because it's very gauche and out of touch, right? To now, like, 200-some years later where if someone's like, "Oh my god, this is an amazing coat." And the impulse to be like, "I got it on sale. It was only \$15." Right?

**Teresa:** [laughs] Maybe.

**Travis:** Are the same. Like, "I didn't pay a lot of money for it. It's not fancy. It's not fancy, I promise."

**Teresa:** That's a very Midwestern thing.

**Travis:** I know. But I mean, doesn't that feel like a connection where if someone's like—but back then it would be like, "That's a very fancy shirt." And be like, "Uh, no! I found it! I—I would never pay—I promise! I'm very poor."

**Teresa:** [laughs] Um, and one would argue that probably the thing that we lost at this point in time is the... [laughs] the, um, access to men's legs?

**Travis:** Hmm, yeah.

**Teresa:** Uh, so before this, right? You think about, like, King Louis and all that kind of stuff. They wore tights, right? With short pantaloons. And at this point in time, this is when that completely falls out of favor. No stockings. We go for pants.

**Travis:** [simultaneously] But why?

**Teresa:** Completely cover the leg. And that's something that I always talk about, one of the things I hate about baseball.

**Travis:** The long pants.

**Teresa:** The long pants is when they changed from the short pant uniforms to the long pant uniforms. I think they look like pajamas.

**Travis:** They do look like pajamas. Was it just an impracticality? Once again, of like, if you're wearing those you just look kind of... I don't wanna say silly, right? 'Cause that's not what I mean. But it's interesting, because when they talk about, like, practicality and rationalism and everything, it's interesting how that boils down to, like—no, you know what? I was about to say how it boils down to, in my head, a more masculine version. But that—I'm reversing that, where when I think of a more masculine thing, I'm thinking of that, because that's how this has worked, right?

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Yeah. So it was put very well in around 1930 by the Anglo-German psychologist James Flugel—sorry. John Flugel. Um, who gave—who named this period, right? The great renunciation. Saying, "Men abandoned their claim to be considered beautiful, and henceforth aimed at being only useful."

**Travis:** Huh. This is interesting.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** And I hate it.

**Teresa:** Yes, I hear you. And so—

**Travis:** I bet that was bad for women, too. I mean, obviously it was. But then in that—was we talk about the gender construct, right? Is if that's the man's role, well, then... the construct—

**Teresa:** What is left?

**Travis:** The construct would imply, like, okay, well then women can be beautiful, but not useful.

**Teresa:** Exactly.

**Travis:** A man is to be useful, a woman is to be beautiful, and they can't be either. Like, they can't be both.

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

**Travis:** And, like... in doing so—it sucks how much that is, like, reinforcing the other. Right? So then—man, listen. Children listening to this, there was a time in, like, the '90s and early 2000s where if you were a dude who took any kind of care of himself you were labeled a—and god I hate this term—metrosexual.

**Teresa:** Or if you looked like you took care of yourself. It was always expected that men are supposed to be, like, clean, or like they're supposed to be—

**Travis:** I mean, sort of. But to a point of like, scrubbed, you know, with Brillo pad clean. Not like, yeah, I've taken care of myself and I'm finely coiffed, and, you know, my nails are perfect, and that kind of, you know, trimmed eyebrows clean, right? There was a big difference between, like, presentable and, like, fashionable or whatever. But, like, this idea of putting too much care into your appearance was in some way not masculine was—

**Teresa:** Yeah, you couldn't look like you cared.

**Travis:** But also then the implication with the labeling of the term metrosexual, like it was also somehow not, like, straight, that it was a gay thing to do. So wild.

**Teresa:** So wild.

**Travis:** Such a—like, it's such a wildly small minded way of looking at it. Like, "Did you trim your eyebrows? Huh." Like, what? Yeah, man. I look like an owl. I look like an owl turned into a man. I had to take care of myself.

"Hmm, I see."

What is that look?

**Teresa:** I know, right? So we start to see the first inklings of the pendulum swing backward in the, like, at least in the US and in the UK, right? In Europe, in the 1960s, right? When we see the counterculture movement.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** Part of this was about that, right? So about men growing their hair, right? Growing their beards.

**Travis:** You started to see more lace present in, like, sleeves.

**Teresa:** More lace and crochet, and platforms, and jumpsuits, and—

**Travis:** Bolder cuts just so you could get the whole mod kind of look where it was like—you have the bell bottoms, you have more flair to things, you had more patterns to things.

**Teresa:** So it wasn't just that these fashion trends were for women any longer, right? Because for a long time it was about the length of your skirts, and the fullness of your skirts, and how low the bodice was, and how big your sleeves were, right?

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** So we've got all of that going up. And then in this counterculture movement of the 1960s we see a kind of matching look for both of these sides of this gender construct, right? So like you said, for the mod movements we get very thin silhouettes, very straight, not very fitted. I mean, fitted in a way, like... it's—

**Travis:** Narrow.

**Teresa:** Narrow, right? Not, like, curvaceous at all, right? And then we get into the '70s, where you start getting, like, leisure suits and patterns. We think of paisleys, we think of checks, we think of like—

**Travis:** High waisted men's pants.

**Teresa:** High waisted men's pants.

**Travis:** Bring those back!

**Teresa:** Brightly colored suits. And then in the 1980s we have fashion icons that are men again, like David Bowie and Prince, right?

**Travis:** Well, and not just that. I mean, going into—listen. David Bowie and Prince I think are, uh, male icons. But there's also what one might think of as quote-unquote, ugh, "traditionally masculine" things like rock musicians, right? When you get into, like, Van Halen and, like, things like White Snake and, you know, these kind of, like, uh, you know, metal kind of bands where—Kiss, right? Where it was makeup, and these, you know, jumpsuits, and very flashy, lots of, like, silver lame and lots of bright colors, right? Where it was just like, that—you know, men love this rock music, right? And it was tied to that.

**Teresa:** Yeah, definitely. So now, if you look at best dressed lists, you are just as likely to see men presenting people and female presenting people on the tops of those lists. We've got the Met Gala that we see a lot of people—

**Travis:** Which there are plenty of issues with as far as—when we're talking about, you know, French revolution, avarice—

**Teresa:** [simultaneously] Exactly.

**Travis:** —all of that.

**Teresa:** But we do see more and more male presenting people pushing the boundaries of what is considered fashion, right?

**Travis:** Yes. But I would also push the other way, which is half the time, when it's like, oh, best dressed, uh, look at Tom Holland, right? It's like, cut to him, like, where he's, like, wearing a nice pair of pants.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** And, like, a—

**Teresa:** I mean, it's there, sure.

**Travis:** —a good t-shirt. And then, like, with him is Zendaya who's, like, dressed to the nines or whatever. And it's like, "Look how clean his shirt is," or whatever, is the feeling it has, you know?

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** That idea. It's just like, okay. And I'm not saying that they're not dressing well. It's just that they're dressing well to the standards of, "And it looks like they put about ten minutes of work into it, which is better than zero." You know what I mean?

**Teresa:** That certainly is still there. But, like, I think about, like, uh, for example Lil Nas X, right?

**Travis:** Icon, yes.

**Teresa:** Constantly pushing the boundaries of that kind of thing. Also, people like Jonathan van Ness, right?

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** Who I believe is non-binary.

**Travis:** Correct.

**Teresa:** Also pushing the boundaries of what people wear, right?

**Travis:** Yes, absolutely. But I think that what still must be acknowledged there is they are pushing boundaries.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** So that means inherently it's like, that's a fringe case, right? Where there's an exception to the rule and not the other way around, right? So yes, there are more people who are male-presenting, right? Who show up, and they're wearing something that is more of a fashion, you know, choice, right? And more of a challenge. Something that actually feels reflective of their own personalities, and not just a clean version of the thing everyone's wearing.

But I think that that is not the—that's not the expectation when that person shows up to a red carpet, right? It's usually like, "The cut of that suit is great," and not the other, you know, not like "What made you choose this style? What designer did you work with? What a—oh, this pattern's incredible. Where did you—" right? Like, none of that is there.

It's just like, "Yeah, you look traditionally hunky," right? And I'm not saying there's anything wrong with that! I'm saying it's just not reflective of anyone's inner personality, if everybody is basically wearing the same thing.

If everybody shows up to a thing wearing a suit... huh.

**Teresa:** So, Shmanners Fanners...

**Travis:** I have feelings.

**Teresa:** ... we're giving you—not that you needed our permission. But we are encouraging you to play with color, and makeup, and skirts, and fun pants, and accessories, and whatever it is that makes you feel good.

Because even though the gender construct is just that, you deserve to feel beautiful.

**Travis:** Here's what I'll say. I'll go a step further and say, all of those things—makeup, hair, nails, what you're wearing—none of that is identity, right? Those are all choices.

**Teresa:** Exactly, yeah.

**Travis:** Those are all choices you make. So none of those things should even belong to the gender construct, right? Because makeup isn't inherently for girls. Right? It wasn't before. Somebody chose it halfway through its lifetime. It's like if right now suddenly somebody just went, "Cars are for girls!"

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** And you're like, "What? What are you saying?" Right? And so this idea of, let go of the idea that those things even belong to a construct. And if you feel that that's reflective of some part of you, right? If you're like, "I think I'm a person who does this." You are! That's all that ha—that's all that matters!

**Teresa:** I would be remiss if I didn't say this line that Alexx wrote very beautifully, word for word.

"Today's revolution is gender euphoria."

**Travis:** That's beautiful. I'll also say one last thing, just because this is a personal kind of crusade of mine. I hear a lot from, like, parents usually who have, you know, boys, who have sons who want to wear nail polish, and then they get picked on at school.

And the thing that I want to make very clear to anyone listening, and hopefully anyone listening to this, uh, already knows this. But if you don't, or if you know people who don't—that's not an inherent—that's not a nature thing in kids. That's a thing they have learned, that a boy wearing nail polish

is weird and deserves to be made fun of. And there's really only three places they can learn that.

They can learn it from other kids in school, they can learn it from TV or movies or whatever, and they can learn it from you. And even the kids—if they learned it from other kids at school, then that means that those kids learned it at home or learned it on whatever they were watching, right?

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** And so that is where we—you know, even if you're an adult and you're not going to school anymore, right? But you have kids who go to school, or you have nieces, nephews, whatever, that go to school, it is not too late for you to have an impact on the experience of kids going to school by making sure you have conversations with your kids that say, "Hey. I want you to know if you see kids like that at school, if their nails look good, compliment them." Right? If they're doing it, if they made a bold choice, compliment them.

**Teresa:** And if you don't like it, don't say anything at all.

**Travis:** Don't say anything. The best thing we can do is support each other, right? That is an impact you can have. Because the kid who's doing it can feel confident till the day is long, and they should. But that's just confidence to get through the bullying that they're getting from other kids that shouldn't be doing it in the first place. And it all starts with the kid, you know what I mean? With—at home. Talk to them.

Okay. Thank you so much for listening. Thank you to our editor, Rachel, without whom we could not make this show. Thank you to our researcher, Alexx, without whom we could not make this show. Thank you to you for listening. I don't wanna make this show without you, and you can't make me, stinkers.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Um, we're gonna be—me, Justin—no. Me, Griffin, and Dad are going to be at Gen Con next weekend doing some panels, doing a bunch of

stuff. Um, and then we got a bunch more shows coming up, tours coming up for My Brother, My Brother, and Me and Adventure Zone. If you go to [bit.ly/mcelroytours](http://bit.ly/mcelroytours) you can find it there.

If you haven't yet, check out the merch over at [mcelroymerch.com](http://mcelroymerch.com). And on August 1st, there will be new merch over at [mcelroymerch.com](http://mcelroymerch.com), so go check that out. 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 constantly taking your topic submissions, your idioms, your questions. Send those to [shmannerscast@gmail.com](mailto:shmannerscast@gmail.com), and say hi to Alexx, 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?

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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