

Shmanners 421: Hamlet of the Queen

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[theme music plays]

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

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

Travis: And you're listening to Shmanners!

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette...

Travis: For ordinary occasions! Hello, my dove.

Teresa: Hello, dear.

Travis: How are you?

Teresa: Good.

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: [chuckles] How are you?

Travis: Kids are back at school, back to 6:45AM wake-ups. Constantly diffusing little emotional bombs every morning.

Teresa: Do you think that other people record podcasts at 7:45AM?

Travis: The cool ones do.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: Everybody knows that's a magic hour for comedy!

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: You know, my dad used to go to work—

Teresa: I'm feeling real magic right now.

Travis: My dad used to go to work every morning at 4AM to do the morning show on radio. People have been doing it for years, it's a proud and storied tradition. A McElroy family tradition to do podcasts far too early in the morning.

Teresa: I mean, I also, I used to work the early bird shift sometimes at the pool, where I had to open up the pool.

Travis: Birds shouldn't swim. Except penguins.

Teresa: [chuckles] At 5:30. But like, I always imagined myself a morning person until I had to like perform in the morning.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: And now I'm like, maybe I'm not really a morning person.

Travis: I'm an all-day Travis.

Teresa: You are an all-day Travis.

Travis: Yeah. I can turn it on. I can't turn it off. That is the one problem.

Teresa: You turn it on until it's no longer there, and you run out.

Travis: Yeah, it shuts off on its own.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I don't have access to that. It's like when someone's like, "Something's wrong with my phone," it's like, "Well, you just have to let the battery run out. And then when it dies, then plug it back in, and then we can work on it." And it's like, "Well, it's frozen. I can't do anything." That's me.

Teresa: That's you.

Travis: I'm a broken phone.

Teresa: But you're my favorite phone that I'll never let go.

Travis: Hey, thank you so much. What are we talking about this week?

Teresa: Hey, we are talking about Marie Antoinette's big girl pretend village.

Travis: Okay?

Teresa: [laughs] Listen—

Travis: You know what I'm—I'm picturing like, there's a couple play places we've been to where it's like, you know, the inside of a shop is what it looks like. But then you go in and they've like made a village out of the mats that they use for like gymnastics.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And so you just have these big, soft buildings. And it's like, “And this is the bakery. And this is the veterinarian's office. And this is—”

Teresa: The salon.

Travis: The salon. And it's not that far off.

Teresa: Who doesn't love a clubhouse, right? Everybody loves a clubhouse.

Travis: Listen, man, I grew up watching Pee-Wee's Playhouse and like Fred Penner's Place. And I love the idea for—no matter what it is, I love the idea of like, hey, come in here. And you're like, whoa! It's a whole place just to yourself with all your stuff and it's cool. Yeah, man, we're suckers for that.

Teresa: I mean, the girls really love—in their little playground, in the backyard, there is a kind of elevated platform that has a... that has a little like vinyl like tent roof on top and—

Travis: You are describing this in such a—like it makes it sound like it's just a warehouse. It's a play set with like a swing set. And there's the thing you climb up to on the slide. But it's a little platform and it has a roof. I don't know why you—

Teresa: And a... what is that? Like the wheel.

Travis: It does have a ship's wheel, for some reason.

Teresa: A ship's wheel. [laughs] Why?

Travis: I don't know.

Teresa: I don't know. [laughs] Because wheels are fun. Kids like it.

Travis: Well, yeah.

Teresa: That's why. Steering wheels are great.

Travis: So a clubhouse.

Teresa: So a clubhouse, yes. But what if you had over 2,000 acres to use?

Travis: And a lot of money.

Teresa: What would you do? Would you do—

Travis: Probably sell a lot. That seems like a lot to take care of.

Teresa: I mean, you don't have to—

Travis: I have a hard time with our backyard.

Teresa: You don't have to do it.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: And that is kind of what happened. It is called the Hameau de la Reine.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Hamlet of the Queen.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: And this is where Marie Antoinette went to escape her stressful public life. Now, I know I said—I see your face. There were several stressors. Let's talk about it. Okay? They started the Queen's Hamlet—

Travis: I am gonna preface this—

Teresa: Oh, okay. Okay?

Travis: By saying it is... I'm not defending the bourgeois. I am not defending the royalty of France at this time. But I guess it is important to note that stress is relative.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Right? And there are lots of times where you look at somebody and you're like, "That movie star who gets paid like \$30 million for a movie is stressed out?" Right? Stress is relative. Everybody has their own things. So I'm not saying that I don't think Marie Antoinette was stressed. I just think that maybe at that time, there were some maybe people in France who were stressed for a different reason, who were maybe feeling it a little bit more.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: The Queen's Hamlet started construction 11 years after she took the throne. And it was because she had just given birth to a son, Louis Joseph.

Travis: Oh, at that point, she's off the hook.

Teresa: Yes. And so like up until that point, it had been the object of everyone's attention, right? Marie and the king were betrothed when they were only 14 and 15. Okay. So immediately, there was intense pressure to produce an heir.

Travis: It's also I think—and I'm, listen, I'm no psychologist. Ask anybody, they'll tell you, I'm no psychologist.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: But I do think that there is a connection to be made, and we talked about this with like—we've talked about this with Victoria a lot too.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Of these people who basically never got to really have childhoods.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And then when they reach their adult lives, and everybody's like, "Okay, now what do you want to do?" And they have—

Teresa: When they have their physical adult lives.

Travis: Yes, yes, yes, yes.

Teresa: Not their mental adult lives.

Travis: No. And then it's like, "Well, what do you want to do?" And it's like, they've got all these like pent up childhood things to do, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And so you start getting—and you're like, that's very eccentric and it's very weird, right? And it's like, well, yeah, but there was so much pressure put on them up to this point to kind of be more adult than they were.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And now it's like, "Okay, so what do you want to do for fun?" And it's like, "Well, I'd like to play pretend, please."

Teresa: And add to that, the pressures of producing an air, right? Where Marie is basically a vessel, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: She has no like will of her own, according to like the crown, right? And so, she is to produce children. That's what she is for. And there are several theories, also documents, pointing to Louis' medical problems.

Travis: Regarding performance?

Teresa: Regarding performance.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So there may have been a specific condition having to do with the skin around a sexual organ...

Travis: Mm-hmm?

Teresa: Being too tight.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: And not allowing him to be comfortable while performing sexual functions.

Travis: Oh?

Teresa: Also, there has been speculation that he suffered from... well, for certain, a lack of sexual education, decreased libido and probably erectile dysfunction.

Travis: Oh, boy. So even more stress, as far as conceiving.

Teresa: Yes. So if Marie is the vessel, Louis the... let's see, the gardener?

Travis: I'm way—yeah—

Teresa: The tender?

Travis: Where's she going with this?

Teresa: The gardener?

Travis: The plant the seed?

Teresa: That plants the seed in the pot. She is the pot.

Travis: I'm lost. Can I say, I'm absolutely lost in this metaphor.

Teresa: [chuckles] Sorry. Listen, I've been watching a lot of Bridgerton.

Travis: Uh-huh?

Teresa: And so there's some vague gardening metaphors boiling around.

Travis: Now listen, I'm just gonna say it, folks. I'm gonna put Teresa a little bit on blast here. Rewatching Bridgerton, because she has been thoroughly enjoying that you can turn on the like, what is it, descriptive narration?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And she's like, "It's like an audiobook!"

Teresa: It is!

Travis: So if you want to just listen to Bridgerton while you do other things, turn on this. If you're someone who's sight impaired in some way and you've been saying like, "Ah, I'd love to watch Bridgerton, but I'm going to miss out on all of the sensuality and sexiness." Don't worry, friends! Turn on those descriptors and enjoy it like it's a book.

Teresa: It's very good. Anyway... So, it took years. Years for the couple to consummate their marriage at all.

Travis: And then to not have a son until she's so old. 25? Whoa!

Teresa: I know! Whoa.

Travis: Oh my god!

Teresa: We're being facetious, listeners.

Travis: Yes. But I will say at that time, all judging aside, in that era, I can't imagine what those conversations were being had with her where it was like, "You're almost—like you're 25. Maybe it won't ever happen."

Teresa: Yeah. And he was actually the second born. So the first born was a girl. And patriarchy, ugh.

Travis: Gross!

Teresa: [laughs] Right? Oh, man... They had been labeled as, quote, "Biological failures." The two of them. One for not consummating the marriage for a very long time, and not getting pregnant for a long time. And then also making a girl instead of a boy. So, once the boy was born, it was a massive relief.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Right? And the country rejoiced, right? For a fleeting moment, Marie Antoinette felt that she was stable in her reputation, right? The full scale—

Travis: Was this before after she had cups made in the shape of her boob?

Teresa: No, it was before.

Travis: Okay. That's true, is that—

Teresa: It is true.

Travis: That's the—champagne or tea? People talk about that the champagne, the rounded champagne flutes, right? Were like her boob. But at the very least, there were tea cups made in the shape of her breasts.

Teresa: There were teacups made. So. at this moment in time before revolution sets in, right? And they're like, "Yay, she did it!" She was able to turn her eye around Versailles, right? And—

Travis: Oh, hey, good turn of phrase.

Teresa: He-he-he-he. She hated Versailles, all the time. From the moment that she stepped foot in the palace, she hated how stuffy it was, she hated how sprawling it was. She didn't like—

Travis: It's hard not to roll eyes at that too, when you think about the bourgeois and the problems with like the, you know, the poor in her country and everything. Where I was like, "Okay, so the problem is it's too fancy and too big." [titters]

Teresa: Well, there were—okay, for a couple of reasons. First of all, it was built by her father-in-law. And so everything in it was dedicated to him, right?

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: There were portraits everywhere. There were mirrors everywhere. There were lots of places for people to hide and to spy on her.

Travis: Oh, okay. Yeah, I don't like that.

Teresa: And there were so many people just constantly around her all the time. There was no privacy, right?

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And so she really wanted some place that she could retreat from the scrutinizing public eye, right? There are about 2000 acres of countryside around Versailles, and she was given some room, right? They were like, "Here you go. Do whatever you want. Here."

Travis: Do you think they said it like that? "Here you go. I don't know, man."

Teresa: I mean, I think so.

Travis: "Whatever you wanna do. Sounds great, dude. Have fun."

Teresa: And so, she did not live in the palace proper at this time. She lived in a smaller kind of outbuilding. I mean, smaller next to Versailles, right?

Travis: It was a one room wooden shack.

Teresa: [laughs] No. It was a chateau, let's be honest. And so it was a short carriage ride from the palace to her chateau, known as Le Petit Trianon. Which was originally built for Madame Pompadour.

Travis: Madame de Pompadour! Ah, famous from Doctor Who.

Teresa: Ah!

Travis: You said chateau le pee—le petit... the little—

Teresa: Trianon.

Travis: Eh! The little... say it again?

Teresa: Trianon.

Travis: I have no idea. Something... no. The little...

Teresa: The little house.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: I think. And so, this is where she set up her residence. And even the king had to have an invitation to come and see her there. And so like, she basically was like, "I'm out!" Right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Yeah. She had a she shed.

Teresa: She did. She had a she shed.

Travis: She had a she shed.

Teresa: Yeah, outside. And to begin with, it wasn't to her taste, right? It was originally built for Madame Pompadour. It wasn't to her taste. There was also several like greenhouses—

Travis: Madame de Pompadour, from what I remember from Doctor Who, which is where I get all of my historical information—

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: Was a like beloved mistress to the queen. So beloved even—or to the king, right? So beloved even the queen was like, "Yeah, she's great. We're friends," right?

Teresa: Yes, yes.

Travis: So it wasn't like a mistress as one might think about these days. It was more of the queen being like, "Yeah, man, it gets him out of my hair. This was not a marriage of love. That's totally fine."

Teresa: Totally.

Travis: And she was like beloved by the people and a great—

Teresa: And at court as well.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: She became very rich. So, several outbuildings were also around this chateau, including some greenhouses. Now these greenhouses were renowned, right? Beloved. And she might have ruffled some feathers when she destroyed them.

Travis: Oh, no! I can't wait to hear more about that. But first, how about a word from another Max Fun show?

[break]

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[break]

Travis: Okay, so she's Godzillaing around.

Teresa: A little bit. A little bit.

Travis: And they're just smashing some greenhouses.

Teresa: Now she—

Travis: For fun? Like a Bart Simpson type?

Teresa: No.

Travis: Throwing rocks?

Teresa: I don't know. But a lot of the plants were moved, okay? Moved to Paris, moved to other places. And the greenhouses destroyed. And so, part of her mission was to erase Louis XV. [titters]

Travis: Because she's with the sixteenth, right.

Teresa: She's with the sixteenth. Her father-in-law made all this stuff. And she's like, "Ugh, get this dude away from me."

Travis: I'm just gonna say it, that's too many Louis.

Teresa: It's a lot.

Travis: At that point? At that point, it's hard enough when you get into like thirds and fourths, to be like, "Which one is that?" You get into 15, 16, 17, they had to be thinking at that point like, "Hey, dad, do you think history's gonna have a hard time telling us a part?"

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: "Do you think that maybe when someone says Louis the fifteenth or sixteenth or whatever, they're not gonna have a clear image in their head as to which one we are?" And the dad's gonna be like, "No, what are you talking about? Of course they'll remember exactly what era I was king and when you were king, and what we did. Be quiet. That was silly."

Teresa: [laughs] So, she had a vision, okay? She wanted a pastoral haven, all right? She was in love with the idea of like gentle rolling hills and romantic landscapes.

Travis: Now, you said something very important there, that I think is the key to all this. The idea of.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Right? This is, as is often the case, we see this a lot if you ever watch like—well, there used to be like Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous, and then like MTV Cribs. And we see it now, whenever they do like, you know, Vanity Fair or whatever goes to like a celebrity's home who has more money than they know what to do with, right? And they're like, "I had this chair built out of, you know, an 18th century church or whatever." And you're like, "You did, what? Huh? Excuse me?" And it's this thing of reaching a point where you have the idea of rustic.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: The idea of like natural, the idea of—and it starts to be like, yeah, I could see how that inspired that. But that's not what you're doing. You know that, right?

Teresa: Yeah. At this time, that ideal was very English, right? The English garden was the ones that had like soft and natural kind of lines, and shading trees and open space for picnics. And like kind of haphazardly growing like flowers and things like that, right?

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Very natural looking. Still cultivated.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: But natural. And the French ideal garden at the time was very regimented, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So they were about authority, right? Bending nature to your will.

Travis: Showing dominance.

Teresa: Dominance. Whereas the English style garden at the time was about poetry.

Travis: That's how I—that's how I garden. You know that. I like to plant my plants and then let `em—

Teresa: That's right.

Travis: Let `em go.

Teresa: Let `em go.

Travis: Wherever they want.

Teresa: Do what they like.

Travis: That is how I garden. Listen, nature, life finds a way. You know what I mean?

Teresa: [chuckles] And so this is when Marie had her vision. She had sketches, even.

Travis: I bet they were bad. [laughs] Just a guess. But everyone had to pretend like they were really good.

Teresa: I mean, I don't know if *she* did these sketches.

Travis: Oh, okay, she had sketches done.

Teresa: She probably had them done. But there were sketches of what she had imagined, right? And it took six years to complete her vision.

Travis: So what was the vision? We've been dancing around my little play village. New from Parker Brothers.

Teresa: So—

Travis: Hasbro? Who would make it? What does the kids play—what's the one—who makes—

Teresa: No, Hasbro.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: They make toys. Yeah. Tens of thousands of cubic meters of earth were moved by hundreds of laborers to create man-made ponds and lakes and rivers and artificial hills. There is a Roman style temple to Cupid as well as a belvedere, which is a small building, kind of decorative building. And these designs were modeled after antiquity. There is a mill. There is like a grotto, a rock almost—

Travis: This is way more than I thought it was!

Teresa: Mountain with like a path winding through.

Travis: I knew a little bit about this from Supersizers Go.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: And I thought it was just like—

Teresa: Favorite program of this podcast.

Travis: I thought it was like, “Yeah, man, there's like a barn and a house, and we've set up like a farm.”

Teresa: Nope.

Travis: This is like a full—

Teresa: Much more. It's a full-on village.

Travis: Oh, boy.

Teresa: So, she has her quote house in this village, right? So this is another house, right? So she's got her little chateau, right? And then she's got the village. In the village, she has a house that is like her bedroom, right? That has a couple of sitting rooms and a receiving room. And then it has an elevated walkway to another house that is like a games kind of area, right?

That's hers. And then there's several outbuildings that, if they were in a house, would be connected, right? But because there—it's a village, you gotta walk outside, past a little garden. And then you get to the other house, there's like a boudoir. Like a... a boudoir is more like a dressing room.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Right? So there's like a dressing room.

Travis: I'm just, I can't stop picturing, imagining one of these many, many laborers coming home after a hard day's work and their wife being like, "So, what is the project?" And he's like, "Honey... You're not gonna believe this. Hand me a bowl of mud to eat for dinner. Let me tell you."

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: "We'll try to get the birds out of here because we don't have a roof. But let me tell you all about what she's got us building."

Teresa: Yeah. So, okay, I'm trying to—

Travis: I want to see if I can find like an artist's rendering of it, because I'm trying to picture it.

Teresa: Oh, I'm trying to—here, let me send you one real quick. Real quick here. I can send you a map.

Travis: Okay, please.

Teresa: But like so it's kind of—there's the lake I told you about, right? There's a big like man-made lake. And then there is a kind of like... it's almost like an amphitheater.

Travis: Yeah, I'm looking at it right now.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Oh my goodness gracious.

Teresa: It's kind of like an amphitheater, where everything's like centered around. And so there's the various buildings, right? And several of them—I think like over half of them are for her, right? So there's the boudoir, there's like a barn that's like a ballroom. There's the mill, right? Which is mostly decorative.

Travis: But it looks like if like—here in Cincinnati, we have like the Ohio Renaissance Festival, right?

Teresa: Yeah! It is kind of like that.

Travis: And it's like you have this thing of it's like a permanent structure of the—it's like that. It's like she built her own like Renaissance Festival in her backyard.

Teresa: Yeah. But it's very interesting, because originally—so the outside looks kind of rustic, right? She even employed like set painters to paint them to look older than they were. And also, but also in like very bright colors.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And so like, it wasn't like she was trying to hide this village away. It was very noticeable.

Travis: It's pretty. Can I just say?

Teresa: It is pretty.

Travis: Like I'm looking at the mill. It's pretty. Like...

Teresa: And the outside, very rustic-looking, right?

Travis: Very demure.

Teresa: Very demure. The inside, decorated like a palace. We're talking like silks and cushions and, you know, beautiful things. Marble, all that kind of

stuff, right? So the outside is the playhouse part, but the inside is the actual house part. [chuckles]

Travis: Like when you see those people who build like the like three story dog houses.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And then you go inside and you're like, that's nicer than my home.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah...

Travis: Yeah...

Teresa: And here, I want you to know, this is not just Marie. It was very common at the time for nobles who had more money than they knew what to do with to do this kind of thing; make little mock villages.

Travis: Was this during the same kind of time period as like we've talked about like having your own personal hermit who lives on your land?

Teresa: Yeah, yeah.

Travis: Yeah, okay.

Teresa: The 1730s—no, sorry, sorry, 1780s.

Travis: This is also another thing of like I've listened to enough like usually mystery novels set during like 1800s or like early 1900s, where like you would go to an estate. And it always seems like in those books, like the first thing the owner of like the manor of the estate does is like, "Let me introduce you to the people who work here." And they'll take 'em to like the games-keeper's cabin and stuff and stuff. And be like, "See? I have peasants here too!"

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: It does kind of feel like that thing of like, "Let me show you my peasant collection!"

Teresa: A little bit. A little bit. And so, like I said, this was not uncommon, but the scale was huge. So, you see the map there?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Like I said, some of those buildings are hers. Those are for play fun. Some of those buildings are real. I mean real as if like they are working buildings. There's an actual farm, right? That would supply food for Versailles, right? But also for this. There's a dairy. There was like a tasting dairy room on her kind of end. But there was a real working dairy—

Travis: So would people like live in them and work, I guess?

Teresa: Yeah? There was a housekeeper's cottage. So there was like definitely at least one like building that people lived in. But the other buildings people like worked in, right? Although she did like to milk cows for fun. She thought it was real fun.

Travis: Like taking a—like a second-grade class to like a working farm, how cute.

Teresa: A little bit like that. On the one side of the river, there were actual livestock.

Travis: Like the owners of the farm, whenever you take a second-grade class and they're gonna take turns milking, no one at the farm is thinking like, "This is really gonna up our production today."

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: "With all that help? This is gonna be great."

Teresa: Exactly. And so she held little dinner parties and they dressed in muslin, and they wore like bonnets and collected eggs and—

Travis: They did like poor person cosplay.

Teresa: They did a little bit. They did a little bit.

Travis: Here's the thing, it's really easy to cast like... aspersions? Yeah. At this, right? But there is a degree of like, we like doing Renaissance festivals, right? And I remember being in, I don't know, third or fourth grade, and taking a like trip to—a field trip to like Amish country. And like, it's like—there is a certain amount of I understand the draw of like, “I want to play pretend,” right? Or, “I want to see how other people live,” or, “I want to experience a more rustic version of life,” or whatever.

Teresa: Yeah, like we love going to historical sites that are all like decked out to look like the way that they would have looked.

Travis: Love it. Love it. I think the differences is like, one, the—so, if we're going to tour an Amish village, right? As a school group. First of all, that's been arranged, right? This isn't a drop-in of like, “Surprise, here's 40 kids,” right? It's been planned and this has been arranged, and they get tours and stuff, right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: But there's also like a certain amount of... I think like if you're playing pretend and doing cosplay at a Renaissance Festival, that's historical, right? This is not—there's no mocking inherent in that, right? Whereas if you said, “Oh, we're gonna dress up now to emulate some other culture in the world now,” that we think is more rustic and you know, fun.

Teresa: Pastoral.

Travis: Yeah. Because of how ‘simple’ it is, quote/unquote or whatever. That's hugely offensive. That's obviously offensive, right?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Of like, yeah, okay.

Teresa: Especially because this was a queen, right? Who everyone kind of like had to play their part behind the scenes to make sure that she was having fun, right?

Travis: And I will also say, as someone born and raised in West Virginia and grew up in like Appalachia, it's how I feel a little bit when I see like fraternities or sororities or whoever being like, "We're throwing a like redneck- themed, hillbilly-themed poor person party." And it's like, ah, cool, man. Ah, I'm glad you're having a lot of fun making fun of an area that is underserved and had money taken from them by big mining companies and ore companies or whatever forever. I hope you're having fun with that. Have a great time.

Teresa: Yeah... So this—

Travis: Thank you. We do need to move on, or I'm gonna get very angry.

Teresa: We do need to move on, yes. So, Marie adored it, right?

Travis: Sure she did.

Teresa: And it was touted as the crown jewel of her domain, right? It looked very charming, it was very elegant in kind of like a painting type of way, right? So, she actually had paintings commissioned—

Travis: Sure she did.

Teresa: That she would give away to her friends that visited. It's kind of like, "Take a picture of my house on the way."

Travis: Yeah, it'll last longer.

Teresa: [chuckles] She really did enjoy sharing the village with her children, right?

Travis: Sure, she had other kids to play with.

Teresa: She did have other kids to play with.

Travis: I mean her—like she was a kid and she had other kids to play with, is what I mean. I want to make it very clear that I'm mocking her. Go on.

Teresa: Yes. By all accounts, she was a doting mother. She didn't have to do any of the work, but she did enjoy playing with her children. Which is not common for royals really throughout history.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: It's not common to be involved in your children's lives. She took an active role in their education, and she thought it was important that they at least kind of in a museum type of way, right, look at the thing that she had made as a representation of the outside world.

Travis: I guess—listen, credit where credit is due. It's not a lot, but it is something to be like, "Hey, you've maybe never even gone outside these castle walls or whatever. But there are other—like people live differently from us in different places, and there's a way that things work. And like here's where your milk comes from that you enjoy, and here's where your food comes from that you enjoy." Like, yeah, there's something to that.

Teresa: There definitely is. Not enough.

Travis: Not enough.

Teresa: Not enough.

Travis: But something!

Teresa: Here comes the revolution.

Travis: Oh, boy! It's right there, I see it, over the hill.

Teresa: It's right there. You can't hide from it, even in your tiny clubhouse village. So she assumed, I think, that the French peasants were living very close to the way that this village represented.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: And she was wrong.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Instead of peaceful lives in the countryside, they were starving. And so, rather than contend with that difficult truth, Marie retreated further and further from public life. And I know that we keep saying public, but it was important not only as kind of a display of power, but as a display of being connected to your power, right? The idea that like, "I know that I'm in charge of something that is very serious."

And the way that you do that is you have balls and engagements and give like speeches, and be seen out among the things. I mean, even if you are set apart, right? If you're not given any face time, people are like, "What is she doing?"

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And so, even though Marie really enjoyed the philosophy of the simple life, being happy—

Travis: Starring Nicole Richie and Paris Hilton.

Teresa: [chuckles] Being happy is not within the job description of a queen. It was not her job to be happy.

Travis: I can also see where—I mean to like sum that up, it would be very easy for her to either in her head, or out loud to advisors or whatever, make the argument of, "But I am kind of experiencing the commoners. I'm out there—I know more about it than most queens." It's like, yeah, you need to go do the stuff out there.

Teresa: Yeah, do the thing that you're supposed to be doing. That turn of phrase, by the way, was a very wonderful quote by Caroline Weber, who is the author of the *Queen of Fashion: What Marie Antoinette Wore to the Revolution*. Good book.

Travis: You know she probably never said, "Let them eat cake."

Teresa: I know.

Travis: That's apocryphal. Well, because one, she would have said brioche.

Teresa: [chortles]

Travis: But two, like it, apparently it's something, because I just looked it up, it's like there are similar tales like that kind of throughout the world. Like folklore of like someone saying that thing. And there's no historical evidence of it actually being a quote that she said, like it's not anywhere. Nobody talks about it.

Teresa: The sentiment is true though, it seems.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Okay—

Travis: And the important thing people always ignore, we talked about this with the idiom one. Sorry to derail it.

Teresa: It's all right.

Travis: For the first time ever.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: The full thing is when someone's like, "They don't have bread to eat," and it's like, "Well, let them eat cake," right? I think it's often said of this like, "Oh, I don't care, let them eat cake." As like a, "Eh, F them," kind of way. But it's more of like, "Okay, I don't understand. I'm so out of touch."

Well if they don't have bread, let `em eat cake." Right? It's showing how out of touch, not how dismissive, I think. But anyways, just people misuse it a lot.

Teresa: So all told, she really only got to enjoy the little hamlet that she created for a few years. Because in 1789, October 6th to be precise—

Travis: Our wedding anniversary?

[pause]

Travis: Eh? [chortles]

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: I think so? Yeah, here's the problem, folks—

Teresa: [laughs] Yeah.

Travis: I think October 6th.

Teresa: Is it—or the sixth or the seventh.

Travis: No, because Griffin's—

Teresa: Is December... sixth.

Travis: Seventh—no, what?

Teresa: What?

Travis: Oh, no. Okay, go on.

Teresa: Is when they left Versailles completely. They had to leave, the gates were being—

Travis: Griffin and Rachel's—

Teresa: Broken down.

Travis: Is the seventh. And so ours is the sixth.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And so her royal gardener would do what he could to protect the hamlet. But it was ransacked. Revolutionaries cleaned out every inch of the palace grounds, taking furniture and jewels and artwork and—

Travis: I grant it there, but only because like... I don't know, I'd like to live there. It seems nice.

Teresa: It was gutted of everything valuable. Because remember like I said, on the outside it looked rustic, but on the inside it was fit for a queen. And so it would stay untouched for 150 years.

Travis: But like the buildings.

Teresa: The buildings.

Travis: Because the insides were very touched.

Teresa: The insides were completely touched out. And so—

Travis: I highly recommend, it still stands. Like if you want to see it.

Teresa: Yeah, totally.

Travis: Google pictures of it, because it is very interesting.

Teresa: Well, and they are in the midst of restoring it to what it would have been like when she had first made it. Although they are not making it look pristine, right? They are keeping the aging on it. But in a kind of like, "This is what it might have looked like now if it had not been touched," kind of way. Does that make sense?

Travis: Yeah, they're leaving the patina on.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: And if you have ever watched the Antiques Roadshow, you have to leave on the patina. The Mandy patina has to stay on, folks!

Teresa: And a few monarchs between now and then did attempt to kind of like restore it as kind of like, not to its former glory, but to not dilapidated buildings.

Travis: To some kind of glory, yeah.

Teresa: And so it was a little more practical, right? A little more sedated.

Travis: A little more demure.

Teresa: A little more demure. Because the fact is, right, we don't want to go back to that kind of ignorance is bliss kind of like look. But also, these buildings were not built as like *buildings*, right? They were supposed to be kind of like a stage set.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So they didn't always really weather the storms very well. And so thanks now to dozens of—not hundreds, of meticulous craftspeople and scholars and historians and architects, they are starting to revive it, right? In fact, if you look at it, you will probably—if you look at today, they are still working on it like you can see the scaffolding type work.

Travis: You should check it out. It looks really cool.

Teresa: You should check it out. And so even though it was neglected for over 150 years, the French monarchy feels—well, former monarchy, feels that it is important historically and accurately to preserve it. And so there's like, you can look in the documentary, *The Secret Versailles of Marie-Antoinette*. And it goes through all of the different kind of detailed

archeological expositions that they have going on to figure out what it was like. Things like the thatched roofs obviously had to be replaced and things like that. And so if you're ever in Paris, you can buy a ticket, you can go and look. It's not as crowded as Versailles. So you know, you might actually get a chance to look at something up close and personal.

Travis: Speaking of up close and personal, I'd like to personally thank our editor, Rachel, without whom we could not make the show. Personal thanks to our researcher, Alex, without whom we could not make this show. And thank you to you for listening, personally. We can make the show without you, but then no person would be listening.

Teresa: [titters] Oh, boy.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: That's a little off the rails.

Travis: I don't know. What else, Teresa?

Teresa: We always thank Brent Brental Floss 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, Shmammers Fanners. If you love to give and get excellent advice from other fans, go ahead and join that group today. Like Travis mentioned, we thank Alex. If you would like to submit questions or topics or idioms, write to her, shammnerscast@gmail.com. And say hi, because she reads every single one.

Travis: And don't forget to check out mcelroymerch.com as well as going to bit.ly/mcelroytours to see all the appearances coming up. Including me and my brothers and dad are going to be at Rose City Comic Con in... Portland. I think. Yeah.

Teresa: I think that's where that is.

Travis: Yeah! So check that out, and that's going to do it for us. So join us again next week.

Teresa: No RSVP required!

Travis: You've been listening to Shmanners.

Teresa: Manners, shmanners. Get it?

[theme music plays]

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