

Shmanners 452: The Great Exhibition of 1851

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[theme song 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: I'm well.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: I mean, I think that the internet knows now that I've been getting dressed in the style of whatever we're talking about.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And this is Victorian.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: No surprise. 1851. And I think it's my least favorite, so far... I don't know. It just feels kind of... lain, severe, reserved.

Travis: Yeah. Victorian.

Teresa: [laughs heartily]

Travis: A time of a style of dress that's very reserved, and a behavior that's not as reserved as you might think.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Victorian.

Teresa: Victorian.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I'm trying to think of anything clever to say about 1851, or Victorian, and I'm coming up zilch-o. [laughs]

Teresa: Oh, really?

Travis: Yeah, but I wanted to take people behind the process...

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: ... of what I was trying to do...

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: ... rather than just sitting there with dead air, while I try to think of something funny. I got nothing.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Yeah. Cool! Hey, thanks. Welcome to the show.

Teresa: Well, we talk about Queen Victoria a lot in *Shmanners*.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: And this one actually has more to do with Prince Albert than Queen Victoria.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Um, so we are discussing today the Great Exhibition of 1851.

Travis: Now, yes. Albert was something of an exhibitionist.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: That's, uh... am I using that correctly?

Teresa: Yes, actually. [laughs]

Travis: He *loved* exhibitions.

Teresa: He was part of the kind of great fervor of industrialization, and um... science, and discovery in general.

Travis: And it was a time where... I think that we've kind of gotten away from it, somewhat. But science, as... almost science like magic, right?

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Where you would have these world's fairs and exhibitions, and everything, where it's like, "You guys aren't gonna believe this."

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Right, and almost treating science like a circus...

Teresa: Mm-hmm, sure.

Travis: ... where people would come through, and see, like, these new electrical lights, and Tesla up to his old tricks, and stuff.

And now, we still have kind of conferences or whatever - like, keynote speeches, where people will reveal, like, the latest model of a thing.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: But not really in the same way, where it's like an expo, like...

Teresa: Yeah. Not for the *masses*.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Right? They have those kind of things for people in the industry, right?

Travis: Right.

Teresa: And, like, the conferences and stuff, *you* are certainly familiar with the mall security one. What's the one from— *Paul Blart: Mall Cop*.

Travis: Yeah, there's the expo in *Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2*.

Teresa: Where a lot of the cool stuff that they are saying is, "These are gonna be the new technology, the new tech you guys are gonna want," right?

Travis: Maybe a more applicable reference would be E3.

Teresa: Oh, okay!

Travis: The Electronic, uh...

Teresa: Applicable to our audience.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Not to you.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: We're very well-versed in *Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2*.

Travis: I'm trying to remember - it's the Electronic Expo, but there's a third 3 there. But it's where— I don't even think they do it in person, anymore. I think now, it's just speeches and stuff. But where it was like, "Come here, we're gonna show you new video games coming out, new video game technology."

But even then, for the longest time, it was just for journalists and people in the industry.

Teresa: Maybe Entertainment Electronic Expo?

Travis: Electronic Entertainment Expo. Yeah, correct.

Teresa: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Travis: But still, not on the scale of these exhibitions and world's fairs that we think of, of like, "Yeah, man, they spent like five years setting it up, and designing it, and building it and everything." And I think it has to deal with, now, the internet. And like, air travel being so much easier, it's less of a "The only time you're gonna see what people have been getting up to all over the country, to do this things..."

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: "... are at one of these."

Teresa: Right, yeah.

So in the Great Exhibition, AKA the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, AKA the Crystal Palace Exhibition...

Travis: Ooh!

Teresa: Um, it was an international spectacle that shook London and the world, because it was the very first in a series of world's fairs that became

very popular, right? I mean, you were talking about how we had the world fair in Saint Louis, right?

Travis: Yeah. And Paris, and...

Teresa: And Paris.

Travis: ... Chicago, and... And here's the other thing, folks. Just because I am a Disney dad who knows ton of Disney lore, the importance of world's fairs, beginning with this one on through, on Walt Disney, cannot be overstated.

Teresa: Oh, absolutely.

Travis: And you know that, because in Disney World, in the Magic Kingdom, there's a restaurant there called the Crystal Palace. You will just find constant influences and references...

Teresa: Well, the world - the Tomorrowland, right?

Travis: Tomorrowland, like, It's a Small World...

Teresa: Carousel of Progress.

Travis: These are the things that debuted at world's fairs, and Walt Disney was a big simp for world's fairs.

Teresa: [giggles]

It was organized by Henry Cole and Prince Albert, and would be one of the most popular attractions in 19th Century London. And it was, like, the original big-scale publicity stunt.

Travis: Yeah. Almost— It was, like, selling people on technology.

Teresa: Not only that, but on the, quote, "grandness" of the British Empire.

Travis: Oh!

Teresa: Right?

Travis: Okay, so it was a PR stunt for how great Britain was.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Because it was said that the sun never sets on the British Empire, right? And that was absolutely true. They were the world's colonizing force, right?

Travis: Yeah, they kinda set— I mean, listen. Other people have colonized.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: But *nobody*— like... In many ways, Great Britain is maybe... the thing they're greatest at...

Travis and Teresa: [simultaneously] Colonization.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: That's right. And it was literally because there was a part of the world in sunlight at all times, that the British Empire claimed as their own.

Travis: So both a fun...

Teresa: It boggles the mind. [chuckles]

Travis: Both a fun play on words, and a terrible practice.

Teresa: Yes.

Um, and so from May until October, people from all over the world poured into London to see futuristic machines and stunning examples of architecture, musical instruments... Artisans were set up in booths, in a

great exhibition hall, right? But the one that we talk about as the Crystal Palace is the famous part of it.

Um, it's entirely made of glass, right? And encompasses several large oak trees. Like, *full-size* oak trees.

It was astounding, right? Not only because, like, at the time glass wasn't something that was considered to be a building material.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: But also, like—

Travis: Easy now, to think of greenhouses and stuff. And be like, "Alright, cool, but—"

Teresa: I mean, and they *have* greenhouses.

Travis: But not, like, *glass* glass, right?

Teresa: No. Well, they did have glass greenhouses. Um, hothouses, they would've called them. But it was the sheer scale...

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: ... that had never been really seen before. It was designed by architect and gardener Joseph Paxton, and it needed over nine months and 2,000 workers to put together.

Travis: *Wow*. It's one of my favorite things about these world's fairs...

Teresa: Oh, I'm sorry. Not oak trees - *elm* trees, excuse me.

Travis: Elm trees.

[whispering] I don't know that I know the difference. Like, if I saw them...

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: You know, if somebody did a lineup and said, "Which one of these is an elm tree?" I could tell you if it was coniferous or deciduous...

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: ... but one of my favorite things about world's fairs and stuff is along with whatever technology or electronics are being displayed, the one-upmanship in like, "And also, we built this one thing..." that everybody's gonna be like, "That— what? That's incredible!" And it's how we got the ferris wheel.

And if you are interested in world's fairs at all, I highly recommend *Defunctland* on YouTube. You can find, one, lots of wonderful videos. You should be watching *Defunctland*, anyways: D-E-F-U-N-C-T-land. Um, but they talk about how the ferris wheel is a direct, like, "We need to one-up the Eiffel Tower."

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: So the ferris wheel was invented.

Teresa: And so it was, um... it was something that was highly anticipated, it took a lot of time and planning in order to do, and the opening day, the pomp and circumstance surrounding it was fantastic.

Travis: You know what it is?

Teresa: What?

Travis: Like, for anyone who's completely unaware of a world's fair and everything, I think— Think of it on the scale of when Olympics feel like a really big deal, right? 'Cause there are some years where you're like, "Ooh, I don't really care about the Oly—" but when you see one where it's like, "Wow, they have gone all out, and done all this stuff for such—"

These world's fairs were like scientist Olympics.

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: It was separated into several different floors that flanked one great hall, and they were over 100,000 things to see.

Travis: Now, do you think that that was like, "I have eight of this one thing in that ca—"

Teresa: No.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: [laughs] Um, there were 250,000 tickets sold for the opening day.

Travis: Wow!

Teresa: So they were quite literally hundreds of thousands of people just, like, bustling around.

Travis: Just opening day.

Teresa: Just opening day.

Travis: I would hate that! That's so many people.

Teresa: I mean, yeah. It was around for a while, so you didn't have to go to opening day, but...

Travis: Yeah, I try to go right in the middle, so there's still some good science left to see. People haven't used up all the electricity yet, but maybe not so many crowds. Wouldn't want to go the last week, because then there's a bunch of rush to get—

Teresa: Uh-uh.

Travis: You know what I mean.

Teresa: Uh-uh, yeah.

Travis: If I could travel back in time, this is what I'm saying.

Teresa: But this was part of the allure, right? Prince Albert made sure that the ticket price was quite affordable, because he didn't just want the elite to be able to come; he wanted all of London to see.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: So it was not just a kind of, like, "seen and be seen," it was like for *everyone* in London at the time. And, I mean, anyone who could afford to travel from around the world.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: It was just a great gathering of people of all walks of life.

Travis: Yeah. It wasn't just "see and be see." It was also, like, trying to— I think it would be easy - you're looking at me. I said "see and be see," I'm not [crosstalk].

Teresa: [giggling]

Travis: But I think it would be easy to look at that as like, "Yeah, you wanted to make it accessible for people, and everything." But there's also the PR part of that...

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: ... of, like, one, the more expensive tickets are, the less people are gonna be there.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: And two, you're not just trying to impress people who are rich and famous. Because chances are, they would spend— they would support a thing to do the latest and greatest.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: This is also, like, letting *everybody* know, "Isn't this stuff cool?" Like, you're not— Well, especially with the Industrial Revolution going on, right? And the middle class starting to be created in there, saying, "Hey, now that you have some disposable income, maybe buy some stuff? Look at these things you could buy?"

Teresa: Certainly.

Travis: Not just for rich people, anymore! You can buy it.

Teresa: I mean, that's definitely why artisans wanted to participate, and industry wanted to be seen and exhibit their wares, and things like that. Because it was quite prestigious to have a booth, or a display, right? So the more people saw you, it was like free advertising.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: [lowly] I mean, it wasn't free. [normally] But it was, like, advertising for your company.

Travis: It was very focused, concentrated advertising...

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: ... with a captive audience, advertising— Much like doing booths at, like, conventions now.

Teresa: Sure, yeah.

Travis: Right? Where it's like—

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Yeah, it's great to sell those things, but also every business card that you give out is a chance that someone's gonna go, look at your website, and order stuff from there, and all that stuff, right?

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: So it's concentrated.

Teresa: If you were walking around at the Great Exhibition, you may have seen people like Charles Dickens, who went.

Travis: I've heard of him.

Teresa: Karl Marx, Charles Darwin, Samuel Colt...

Travis: I love Karl Marx! Him and his brothers did some of the best comedy I've ever seen. I remember when Groucho and Karl— I'm thinking of different Marxes?

Teresa: I think you are. [laughs] I was like— Did you see how glassy my eyes went?

Travis: Yeah, you got— your smile...

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: ... became as to a grimace, one might say.

Teresa: Uh, Charlotte Brontë, Lewis Carroll, George Eliot, Alfred Tennyson, and Michael Faraday, of the Faraday—

Travis: Of the Faraday cage?

Teresa: Of the Faraday cage. Uh—

Travis: One of my top three cages.

Teresa: Definitely.

Travis: Shark, um... Shark, Faraday, and "rat, in a..." are my three favorite.

Teresa: [laughs] Okay, right.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Got it, got it.

He was not only in attendance, but also served as one of the event planners, and one of the judges of the exhibits. Because there were different prizes awarded for different categories of exhibits. Another way to get people to come, and see, and take a look at things, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Alright. So, if you were to walk into the Great Exhibition, you would see 34 different nations represented...

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: ... and over 14,000 exhibitors in the actual great glass... uh...

Travis: Wonkavator.

Teresa: [laughs] Crystal Palace.

Travis: Oh, okay. I was way off.

Teresa: And these were organized into some pretty broad categories. You got raw materials, machinery, manufactured goods, and fine art. And then each would have, like, subclasses, and subclasses of that. And there were lots of different committees, and juries and whatever, to do awards for things. You know what I'm talking about.

Travis: Yeah. I've been to conventions. There were cosplay contests...

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: ... there was chili cookoffs.

Teresa: So there were lots of different places to go, and people to see, and all kinds of stuff. Um, there were also— there's some really great, um, maps of the Crystal Palace and the different exhibitions that you could see, and it's so jam-packed.

I almost feel like they needed to make... they needed to make it bigger.
[laughs]

Travis: Mm.

Teresa: So that you could spread out a little more.

Travis: I bet that was part of it. I bet the decision was made of, like, "We want it to feel full."

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: "We want it to be overwhelming, when you come in."

Teresa: That was kind of, like, the MO of all Victorian decoration at the time.

Travis: Oh, maximalist, yeah.

Teresa: Maximalist.

Travis: It's my aesthetic. Anybody who watched the office tour that Griffin and I did for MaxFunDrive knows that I'm a maximalist.

Teresa: Yes. So let's start with the British Empire wing.

Travis: I would love to, but *first*, how about a word from another Max Fun show?

Teresa: Alright!

[theme song plays]

[ad starts, groovy music playing]

Jo: *Dr. Gameshow* is a podcast where we play games submitted by listeners, with callers from all around the world, and this is a game to get you to listen. Name three reasons to listen to *Dr. Gameshow*: Kyla and Lunar from Freedom, Maine.

Lunar: Dishes. Folding the laundry. Doing cat grooming.

Jo: [laughs] Okay. Thank you, great.

Manolo: Oh, things you could do while listening... Yeah.

Jo: I love that the rea— like, “Why do you listen to this show?” And Lunar’s like, “Dishes.” Fantastic. [laughs] Manolo.

Manolo: Number one is that it will inspire you. You’re gonna be like, “Oh, I could do that.”

Jo: That’s all we have [laughs] time for, but you’ll just have to find *Dr. Gameshow* on Maximum Fun to find out for yourself.

[ad changes, more upbeat music playing]

Kirk: Say you like video games. And who doesn’t?

Maddy: I mean, some people probably don’t.

Kirk: Okay, but a lot of people do. So say you’re one of those people, and you feel like you don’t really have anyone to talk to about the games that you like.

Jason: Well, you should get some better friends.

Kirk: Yes, you could get some better friends, but you could *also* listen to *Triple Click*, [three click sounds play] a weekly podcast about video games hosted by me, Kirk Hamilton...

Maddy: Me, Maddy Myers.

Jason: And me, Jason Schreier. We talk about new releases, old classics, industry news, and whatever, really.

Maddy: We'll show you new things to love about games, and maybe even help you find new friends to talk to about them.

Kirk: *Triple Click*. [three click sounds play] It's kind of like we're your friends.

Find us at maximumfun.org, or wherever you get your podcasts.

[ads end]

Teresa: We're back. We're starting at the British wing.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Which encompasses a lot, 'cause as we said... [laughs]

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Great Britain at the time claimed a lot of places for their own. Um, one of the major places that would've been represented: the Minton's exhibition...

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Which is a Staffordshire pottery and sundries industry.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So they were known to create vessels that seamlessly blended aesthetics. So think of Rococo shapes, decorated with Asian motifs.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Right? So very seamlessly blended, these kind of cultural...

Travis: Which I bet was like catnip to Victorians.

Teresa: Oh, absolutely.

Travis: Where they were like, "I like how that still fits everything else decorated in my home..."

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: "... but seems interesting to guests!"

Teresa: Exactly.

And so they were very famous for having provided tiles for both the Houses of Parliament and the United States Capitol.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Man, can I just say? We should do an episode about tiles and ceramics.

Teresa: Yeah?

Travis: 'Cause there was a time— here in Cincinnati, like, there was Rookwood Pottery, where there was a time where one of the biggest flexes you could have was, "Oh, my mantle? Thank you for noticing. That's tile work from 'blank' company."

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Right, that that used to be a *huge* flex of where you got your tiles from.

Teresa: Well, I mean, tiles, and ceramics, and pottery, and things... it was one of the only easily-malleable materials...

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: ... before plastics.

Travis: Well, same with like... there was a whole thing of silver.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: When you had a silver tea set, and you could be like, "Yeah, this was crafted by Paul Revere," or whatever, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Of "Johnny Tremain made this." Like, that was a big deal.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Johnny Tremain wasn't real, was he?

Teresa: I don't think so.

Travis: Oh, okay. Anyways, so we have the Minton pottery stuff; what else?

Teresa: Um, so then we have a whole India exhibition. Well - and we know that, again, this is one of the major properties that Great Britain seem to glom onto, right?

Travis: Cling to...

Teresa: Cling to. [laughs]

Travis: ... maybe grasp, um... steal.

Teresa: Plunder.

There were some elaborately-carved ivory thrones. There were jewels, and emeralds, and pearls, and rubies. Um, one of those—

Travis: So a very, like... representation, but through a filter...

Teresa: Absolutely.

Travis: Of, like, "Hey, this is what you, the general British-going public, expect out of India. So we're representing it, but not like..."

Teresa: Right.

Travis: "... to educate you on, like, 'This is what life is—' but more to be like, 'Yeah, we're selling you a bill of goods...'"

Teresa: Right, yeah.

Travis: "... of what you expect from our "colony," quote, unquote."

Teresa: I mean, the idea of, like... having India was like, "Look at the decadence and luxury that we have."

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: "We've taken from this amazing place," right? Apparently, there was also one of those seats that you would use to ride a camel, right? Those all decorated with jewels, and things like that.

Travis: A litter? No...

Teresa: Uh—

Travis: A litter was carried, right? Anyway, it doesn't matter.

Teresa: A howdah.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Let's see... there was— Oh, the largest known diamond in the world at the time was displayed. The Daria-i-Noor and Koh-i-Noor.

Travis: The Daria-i-Noor was a pink diamond?

Teresa: One of the palest diamonds in the world.

Travis: Was it pink? Or did I make that up?

Teresa: I'm not quite sure...

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: ... what color it is.

Travis: I'm picturing it as pink, and you can't take that away from me.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Probably not pink.

Teresa: Oh. Internet, look it up.

Travis: I'm gonna have to look it up. But anyways, let's do a Time Heist.

Teresa: No.

Travis: Okay...

Teresa: Time Heists never work out. They're too messy.

Travis: You never let me do a Time Heist! Okay, fine.

Teresa: Um, we've also got some beautiful, uh, Irish artifacts on display at the time. We've got the 8th Century Tara Brooch, which was a gorgeous Irish artifact hidden back in 700 CE.

Travis: Okay. So the Koh-i-Noor was - meaning "the mountain of light" - was the world's largest known diamond at the time.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And then the Daria-i-Noor was one of the rarest pale pink diamonds in the world.

Teresa: Yes. So you were right: pale pink.

Travis: Boom!

Teresa: You did it.

Travis: I did it.

Teresa: Congratulations.

Travis: I *know* things.

Teresa: Um, you could buy a copy of the Tara Brooch.

Travis: Oh, cool!

Teresa: Which would be really fun.

If we move onto New Zealand, there were some wonderful handcrafted items from the Maori.

Travis: Once again, though, that filter of like "handcrafted" items. Not like, "Look at this amazing technology..."

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Not like, "Yeah, man, listen. Look, it's a culture just like ours that has things—"

But like, "Mm, here's..." like, quote unquote, "simple, yet beautiful art forms—" That kind of stuff.

Teresa: I mean, it was kind of like... like, quote, "exotic."

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Right? That idea. I wanna say... it was presented like an oddity.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: That's what I want to think of.

Travis: And this was a thing with a lot of colonizing, where stuff was presented - I mean, still to this day, it's a thing that happens. Where people will present a thing of, like, "It's a *simpler* culture." Right?

Teresa: Oh, sure.

Travis: "It's more traditional," right? As if because we value this thing, and they value this thing, and it's different from the thing we value, clearly we're advanced...

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: ... and they're lucky that we're there.

Teresa: There's certainly a fallacy in there somewhere, right?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Yeah.

Moving along, we also have - under the great glass Palace, we've got William Chamberlain's very first voting machine.

Travis: Ooh!

Teresa: Which not only allows you to cast a vote; it counts them automatically, and employs an interlocking system to prevent overvoting.

Travis: And no one's ever questioned voting machines since.

... What else do they have?

Teresa: Um, we have British surveyor Frederick Bakewell. He has an invention that is still marked today as the precursor to the modern fax machine.

Travis: Ooh, la la!

Teresa: Um... One of the other big exhibits were the telescopes, which is something that had obviously been around for a very long time, but private citizens didn't have, really, access to these kind of things. You could go and travel, if some... some big hoity-toity guy had his telescope available for when he was not at home, right? You could do home tours, and things like that.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: But most people had never encountered a telescope. There was a five—

Travis: Can you imagine...

Teresa: Hmm?

Travis: ... like, that being your own in-home telescope, being on the scale of like your own in-home TV? Of just like, "I could have a telescope in my home?"

Teresa: [giggles]

Travis: And that blowing someone's mind.

Teresa: Pretty cool!

Travis: That's wild.

Teresa: Um, let's see. Instrument maker JS Marratt exhibited the five-foot achromatic telescope. I'm not exactly sure what that means, but it was like breaking technology at the time.

Travis: Sure. He was a disrupter. I love that.

Teresa: Moving onto the, quote, "foreign countries" wing...

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: So I think that that just meant, for them... anything that wasn't British?

Travis: Sure. "And the rest. Et al."

Teresa: And the rest. [laughs]

Um, let's see. We have got... The Americans have a spot.

Travis: We made it!

Teresa: Including the locksmith named Alfred Charles Hobbs, which showed off a lot that he claimed was more secure than anyone available to the British market.

Travis: Ooh, take that.

Teresa: Take that, Brits!

And let's see... the thing that people really liked about this particular area was that there were demonstrations where he successfully picked two of the

most well-esteemed locks at the time: the Bramahs lock, and the Chubb detector lock. Both of which were used to—

Travis: Sorry, what was that second one? Sorry, one mo'? Say again?

Teresa: This is not that kind of show.

Travis: What was it?

Teresa: Chubb detector lock.

Travis: Okay. Go on.

Teresa: Which were both used in a lot of high-security situations, and you could watch Hobbs bust 'em open like nothing else. It was amazing.

Travis: That is— listen. To this day...

Teresa: [giggling]

Travis: ... there is nothing that gets my attention like a TikTok about somebody picking a lock. I love it. I'll watch it, every time.

Teresa: There were obviously lots of firearms on display. Um, there were the Walter and Dagoon revolvers. Let's see... Try to pick out some of my—

Travis: I'm so surprised— I think maybe I had in my head, when you told me, "We're gonna talk about this exhibit..."

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: ... I was thinking about, like, 1900s world's fairs kind of thing. Where I was like, "Okay. I'm picturing electricity arcing through the air, across these big machines, and Tesla coils, and..."

Teresa: It would eventually come to that, right?

Travis: Yes, but in 1851, it wasn't that.

Teresa: No.

Travis: But that's what I was picturing, was like...

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: ... "And this is my dirigible," right, of these things...

Teresa: [giggles]

Travis: And trying to reset my brain to telescopes and locks and stuff blowing people's minds...

Teresa: And photography.

Travis: Okay, that one probably, yes.

Teresa: Photography was a brand-new thing that they loved there. A lot of people would only have seen daguerreotypes, or they would've seen prints of portraits, and things like that. But photography was a big area at the Exhibition, so...

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Not, like, Tesla coils.

Travis: Okay!

Teresa: But soon. Soon.

Travis: I just imagine, like, students in the 2100s in the future who hear about, like, world's fairs in 1910 or something, and they're like, "Electric coils? I guess I was expecting jetpacks and stuff, like we have now."

Teresa: [laughs] "Like we have now."

Travis: I assume.

Teresa: The French section of the Great Exhibition, I mean... the Brits have a long history of on again, off again with the French...

Travis: Mm-hmm. A lot of frenemy work, there.

Teresa: Yes. Yes. But this was— there was a very beautiful exhibition for the French there. They had carved statues making it feel like a temple. We've got, um...

Travis: Don't you wonder, though? Because when you said French, the first thing that popped into my head was art, right?

Teresa: Oh, certainly, yes.

Travis: And it's like, how much of that is, once again, the branding of "Okay, great, the thing the English love about French culture is you guys seem really artsy and/or fartsy."

Teresa: [giggles]

Travis: "So *your* section, what we want you to submit... is art." Versus, like...

Teresa: Certainly.

Travis: ... how much of it *was* like, "Hey, we French, when we come do your thing, what we *want* to showcase, the thing we're focused on is art." And how much of that is like, the one influencing the other, you know?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Just like, "Oh, when you think of French culture, you're thinking very art, very culture... cutting-edge, couture..." right? And it's like, yeah, that's true, but also they were doing stuff too, you know?

Teresa: Certainly. Certainly.

Um, beautiful silks from Lyon. Delicate porcelain and, like you said, beautiful portraits. So there were so many incredible things to see, not only from the British Empire but places like China and Turkey and Russia. And in the middle of everything, there was a giant crystal fountain.

Travis: A fountain that spit out crystals?

Teresa: No, no, a fountain made of glass.

Travis: That's still cool. That's still good. And it had chocolate coming out of it.

Teresa: No, just...

Travis: No.

Teresa: ... just water.

Travis: Okay. That's still cool.

Teresa: Okay. [laughs]

Travis: Can you imagine, though? It would've blown their minds, if there was a crystal chocolate fountain in the middle of this thing.

Teresa: [laughs] Wait, 'cause it has chocolate, or crystal? Wait, it's made out of...

Travis: No, it's still made of crystal. I mean, obviously it would've blown their minds if they somehow made a fountain that spit out crystals.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: But I'm just saying, like... crystal fountain, made of crystals, that spit out chocolate? They would've lost their minds. That would be—Everybody would be like, "Yeah, man, cool. There was photography and telescopes, and whatever. But did you see what they did? Chocolate! In a fountain, you could just eat it right there."

Teresa: Just eat it right there.

Travis: "It was incredible." Would've changed the course of history.

Teresa: I suppose you're right. There was also a gift shop.

Travis: Of course there was!

Teresa: Of course there was!

Travis: There's always a little gift shop!

Teresa: So the most popular would've been a stack of stereoscope cards that would provide three-dimensional views, right? So they were lithographic cards that were hand-colored. They were held together by a cloth that you would lace into a kind of, like...

Travis: It was the first VR headset.

Teresa: A little bit like that!

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Yeah, basically you had glasses, right, that would go on your face. And the pictures went into a slot that was six inches away from your face, and the way that your eyes would focus on it would make it seem like you're— it almost looked like a three-dimensional picture, right. That two sides would go in, and give you a stereoscopic view of the thing. So instead of just looking at it, it was almost like 3D.

Teresa: *Almost* like 3D, yeah.

One of the things that would go down in history of the Great Exhibition was the first pay toilet.

Travis: [gasps] Wow!

Teresa: It would cost you a penny, and that would become “spending a penny” - that’s a euphemism for using the toilet. Um, and it was one of the first modern toilets in exhibition. And, I mean... it was like the first time that you would want to talk to your friends about having used the toilet.
[laughs]

Travis: Yeah. And leading to the classic poem... “Here I sit, broken hearted...”

Teresa: Mm-hmm. [laughs]

Travis: “... came to poop, and only farted.” Paid to poo— yeah. “Here I sit, broken hearted. Paid to poop, and only farted.”

Teresa: Yeah. [sighs]

Travis: They don’t say “poop” in the classic poem.

Teresa: They don’t say “poop” in the poem.

Travis: I think that was Longfellow, maybe Shakespeare, who wrote that. When Shakespeare was at the 1851 world’s fair.

Teresa: Certainly.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: I’m sure he was there.

Travis: In spirit.

Teresa: Queen Victoria described the opening day of the Great Exhibition as one of the greatest and most glorious days of our lives. Uh, and so if you were there, I think you would be inclined to agree.

Travis: Well, I’ll tell you, this has been a great day for me.

Teresa: Has it?

Travis: Yeah, it's alright so far!

Teresa: Okay, great!

Travis: I mean, it's only like 9:30...

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: ... so we'll see.

Teresa: But it's been great hearing about the Great Exhibition.

Travis: Yes. Was great being here with you.

And, you know, I just want to say thank you to our researcher, Alex, without whom we would not be able to make the show. Thank you to our editor, Rachel, without whom we would not be able to make the show. And thank you to *you* for listening, and paying a penny to [confused tone] use the bathroom with us? No, wait...

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: ... no, forget I said anything.

And thank you, once again, to everybody who supported us in the MaxFunDrive. I know that that was a couple weeks ago, now, but I'm still filled with gratitude.

And thank you to everybody who came out to the live shows that me and my brothers and our dad did last week. Um, we have more coming up throughout the year, so make sure you head to bit.ly/mcelroytours to see all of those. You can also go to mcelroy.family for everything about the stuff that we do.

Check out the McElroy YouTube if you haven't already - McElroy Family on YouTube. And you can also check out mcelroymerch.com for all the stuff we sell there.

What else, Teresa?

Teresa: We always say thank you to 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.

And as always, we are taking your topic submissions, your questions, your idioms. Please keep sending those to us, shmannerscast@gmail.com, and say hi to Alexx, because she reads every single 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]

[acoustic sting]

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