

Shmanners 471: Shmidgerton, 2B: The B Plots

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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: Welcome to fall.

Teresa: Yea— Well... Okay.

Travis: Hey, I don't care what the scientists...

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: ... in Seattle say. I don't know, where do—

Teresa: It was like 80 degrees yesterday.

Travis: Okay, but it's September! Don't take this away from me!

Teresa: [through laughter] Okay.

Travis: I don't know why it's— Why didn't they just make it the first day?

Teresa: Well, wake me up when September ends. ... Ha.

Travis: Do you remember... [sing-song] the 21st night of September? Why did they deci— Why isn't it just the first of the— [sighs]

Teresa: I don't know, man.

Travis: This is like when that Caesar, who isn't Julius Caesar, added two months to the calendar. It's all made-up stuff.

Teresa: Does it have anything to do with the solstice, or maybe like, the revolution around the sun, or...?

Travis: I mean, probably.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Probably. But just make it the 1st, so that we don't have to have people— And I love you, but like you...

Teresa: [bursts out laughing] Yeah.

Travis: ... and our eldest...

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: ... who gets *so incensed* when she sees decorations for an upcoming holiday.

Teresa: But then, we have to keep explaining to her that if you decorate for things, you have to buy them ahead of the thing, so that you can enjoy the decoration during the season of the thing!

Travis: Yeah. If she sees Halloween decorations in August, she's like, "What are they even doing!? It's not even Halloween yet!"

Teresa: Like, yeah. That's the point.

Travis: It's like, "No, I know. I know, baby, but it takes time to stock things, and price them, and buy—" Anywho, that's not what we're talking about today.

Teresa: Not at all.

Travis: We're talking— It's another Shmidgerton episode.

Teresa: Yes. Season two, the B plots.

Travis: Yes. We went through the A plots. Just a quick recap. It is, in fact, my favorite season so far of *Bridgerton*.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Because the Anthony and Kate story is my favorite. I—

Teresa: You love the yearning.

Travis: I like the yearning. But more than that, I think I like friction as chemistry.

Teresa: Mm.

Travis: Where it's just like, "Oh, you annoy me so much, and I love it." Right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Like, that kind of thing. And because they're both two characters that had to grow up too fast, and now see themselves as full of responsibility for taking care of things in the family.

Teresa: They are kindred spirits, aren't they?

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And it's like, those two walls bumping up against each other.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And everybody watching the show, and even people in their lives, are like, "Hey, dummies."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "It's you two." Anyways, I was watching a recap video today.

Teresa: Uh-huh.

Travis: To brush up for this. And somebody just—

Teresa: In preparation.

Travis: And somebody just mentioned the bee stinging her and Anthony reacting thing, and I got choked up.

Teresa: Oh, yeah?

Travis: It's my— It's one of my favorite scenes.

Teresa: Let us not get ahead of ourselves.

Travis: I know. But what I'm saying is, is if this is your first time listening to us talk about *Bridgerton*, and you're like, "But talk about the th—" Go back.

Listen to the other episodes. We talk about it a *lot*. It's *Bridgerton* 1, and Shmidgerton 2, and now this is Shmidgerton 2B.

Teresa: Or not to be? [laughs]

Travis: No, it is.

Teresa: No, you're right.

Travis: I don't understand.

Teresa: Mm, okay.

Travis: I don't follow.

Teresa: Alright. Anyway, so let's start with Eloise.

Travis: Oh, my God.

Teresa: Eloise is being presented at court for the Queen, which is where we also saw Daphne last season. Right? So, she's having her official come-out. Her clothing style will change this season, as she is seen by society as a *woman*. And *Bridgerton*, the series, takes a little bit of a... What do I want to say?

Travis: Stylized? Uh, exaggerated?

Teresa: Okay, yeah. A liberty, perhaps.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: From not only the way that it was presented in the book, but also the way that it would have been presented in history. First of all, the clothing choice is not what they would have worn. I think we talked a little bit about this. When being presented at court, you were expected to wear court dress, which at this point was set by Queen Charlotte.

And it was decidedly out of fashion. She loved the 17th Century silhouette, as opposed to the Regency silhouette, right? So, we've got the fuller skirts, the lower waist. Although they did see where it kind of blended, a little bit? Where you had this almost in-between style for court dress, at this point, where the waist was not at the natural waist. It *was* higher. Not, maybe, as high as the Empire waist. And the skirts were—

Travis: It was a kingdom waist; not yet an empire.

Teresa: Ha. Were decidedly fuller. And it was a very expensive dress, with a lot of fabric, and it was not what you would wear to regular events.

Travis: But we've talked about, in the previous episodes, like... *Bridgerton* ain't aiming for exact accuracy, especially when it comes to the costuming.

Teresa: Of course, yes.

Travis: But it's like a stylized version?

Teresa: It's more to evoke a feeling, I would say.

Travis: Yes. But not so wildly away from what it would have been. It's more like, "Yeah, it's sort of this idea." That's great—

Teresa: It's very glamorized. A lot of the fabrics that they use in *Bridgerton* would not have been conceived of, remotely available.

Travis: I wanna talk about Eloise.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Because I *think*, I think...

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: ... it is a successful version of the character you're kind of supposed to be annoyed and frustrated by.

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: Right? Because we get this a lot more in the first season. But this friction between Daphne and Eloise.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Where Daphne is like the, "I've been training my whole life for this. This is my duty. Marrying successfully is what I do for the family, and—"

Teresa: And she has a kind of ease in that.

Travis: Yeah. "And I take pride in it, and it means a lot to me."

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And Eloise is the opposite of that.

Teresa: Kind of clawing and scraping. [laughs]

Travis: Yeah. And—

Teresa: The opposite of. [laughs]

Travis: You know, in a somewhat— I think it's a bit of a trope, right, where there's a member of the family in these things. Where it's like, "But what if women had rights?" You know what I mean?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And I think...

Teresa: It is very little women, isn't it?

Travis: Yeah. It creates a good dynamic.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: But there's also moments where you see her being a pain... To a point where they're like, "Hey, listen. Yeah, but also like... You're kind of just doing this to frustrate your family, or you don't have any tact in the way that you're doing these things."

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And—

Teresa: And it really seems like the more that her mother Violet pushes her, the most she pushes *against*. Right?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: So throughout the season, Violet's trying to introduce her to people she thinks she might find interesting. She's trying to get her to do things like, [gasps] dance! [laughs]

Travis: But she also gets— There's a change to her character throughout this season... And I have feelings about that, too. But where she talks about wanting to be educated, and not just being seen as marriage property, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And finally gets called out by a dude who's like, "Have you read anything? Why don't you actually learn about feminism?"

Teresa: Yeah, let's get to that for a second.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Let's back it up, just a little bit.

Travis: A man teaches her about feminism.

Teresa: No. Okay, here's the deal. She is still embroiled in the search for Lady Whistledown, right?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: And the Queen is joining her in this hunt, because they're both *obsessed*. And so, Eloise finds a kind of loophole, almost? Into Lady Whistledown. And she's very excited to share all this with Penelope, who's like, [with nervous tone] "Haha! Why don't you just..."

Travis: Spoilers, yeah.

Teresa: "... haha, forget about all of this?"

Travis: Freaking out, yeah.

Teresa: So, she finds, within the pamphlets or the broad sheets that Lady Whistledown publishes, a singular letter. I think it's a K.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: That is very specific. And she's able to trace that K through other pamphlets to the actual printer.

Travis: Yes. But it's not the printer Whistledown uses anymore.

Teresa: Right. It's an older printer.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: And, as she's doing this, she's just kind of swatting her mother away like a fly. Like, "No, just leave me— Let me do my thing." And she meets Theo Sharpe, who you talked about.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Right. And he is— Decidedly, he's lower-class. He's working at a printer shop.

Travis: Once again, another one of those tropes that you see in these kinds of stories. A lot of, "You think you know what hardship is, and what real life is? Wow, you've lived in an ivory tower all your life."

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: "Let me, Leonardo DiCaprio in *Titanic*..."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "... show you what real steerage life is all about."

Teresa: And he does! He gives her books, and they attend a lecture. And— But the whole time, she is still kind of grappling with the idea that—

Travis: Hey, everybody, you might've just heard. The first Wednesday of the month? Test tornado siren go off. Ignore that; it's fine.

Teresa: 'Cause we live in Ohio.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And they do that here. So she is going back and forth between, "Oh, I really like this life that he leads, and—"

Travis: Well, but she— Here's the problem, right? This is another kind of frustration point. She likes it as, almost, a costume.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Right? A play acting of like... "If they were to both get in trouble for the same thing, he's going to get in way more trouble than she is."

Teresa: She would be ruined, yes.

Travis: Yeah. But she's in trouble with *society*.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: He's going to go *prison*.

Teresa: He might go to prison.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Or worse.

Travis: And there's also a lot of, she's read now two things on feminism, and is like, "I'm an expert on this now." Right? This feeling of, "This is my whole thing now, these two things that I've learned." And it's like, oh, baby. This is step one of you learning about it. And you— Like, stay in the student mindset. You know?

Teresa: And this version of feminism is kind of a distraction from what the Queen has charged her with, right?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Where she is supposed to be looking for Whistledown.

Travis: I think what it is – and I think Theo eventually calls her on this – that it's a fantasy thing.

Teresa: Mm.

Travis: Where it's like, "Hey." 'Cause she ends up having feelings for him. But it's like, what *would* this be, in real life? Right? The idea of it is like, this isn't— It's a thing that happens in romance novels and stuff a lot. Where it's like, "Oh, and it turns out, he is actually the heir to his distant uncle. And now, he's lord," or whatever. But it's like, in real life, that's not gonna happen.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And you're just kind of play-acting as [crosstalk].

Teresa: I mean, in real life, she would have to give up literally everything.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: And she's not ready to do that! But she's— So she's trying to find the mystery of Whistledown, and Penelope is getting decidedly nervous about it. And not only trying to discourage her from seeing Theo, which she has to do unchaperoned and unaccompanied, and kind of sneak around and stuff. But also like, "Ha, why don't you just stop this Lady Whistledown stuff?"

And Eloise is like, "Well, I really can't. Because, like, the Queen. [shudders] The Queen, she's onto it. She really wants me to help."

Travis: So, jump— Let's speed it up a little bit, 'cause there's five or six B plots in this. So then, the Queen starts suspecting that *Eloise* is Whistledown.

Teresa: Mm-hmm, yeah.

Travis: And Penelope, in order to protect Eloise, writes about Eloise sneaking off to meet with Theo, and these lectures and stuff she's been attending.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And it's like, "Well, Eloise wouldn't have outed herself like that, so she's off the hook."

Teresa: Right.

Travis: But Eloise is devastated about this. And it basically ends that fantasy life she's been having.

Teresa: Right. *And*, if we're gonna go all the way through, she notices Penelope sneaking out. And decides to go through Penelope's room.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: She literally tears up Penelope's room at the Featherington ball. They hold a ball at the end of the season; we'll talk about that. And finds the Lady Whistledown paraphernalia, and the money, and everything. Right? She finds her out. And not only is she devastated at the fact that Penelope wrote about her, right? That seems to be kind of secondary. Where she was like, "I'll be fine. It'll blow over. But the worst part is that you deceived me."

Travis: Yes. And it also doesn't help that, back in season one, Colin and Marina, it ended up devastating Colin that when Lady Whistledown wrote about Marina and stuff, to protect Colin from her...

Teresa: Mm-hmm, right.

Travis: So talking about the Featheringtons.

Teresa: Well, do you want to do that? Or do you want to do Marina next?

Travis: Oh, we can do Marina real quick. 'Cause it's—

Teresa: It's real quick.

Travis: It's real quick. And it's— Once again, listen. Tropes, some of 'em are really, really bad. But some of 'em make me very happy. And one of those happens here, where Colin finds out Marina is back. And near the— What's the name of their country estate? Anyways, near their country estate...

Teresa: Right, yeah. They are actually neighbors.

Travis: So he goes over to visit. And he's like, "I need to see her." Basically, I think he's looking for closure.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And her husband, that was very much a marriage of convenience...

Teresa: Sir Philip.

Travis: ... is there. And it's like, "Oh, no, this is gonna be awkward." And Colin and Sir Philip get along great! They talk about traveling, and they're talking about like, "Oh, and have you seen this emerald?"

Teresa: And plants, and stuff.

Travis: "And this bird? Oh, and this thing?"

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And Marina's like, "Ugh. Actually, I kind of wanted you guys to fight over me." That's the vibe, right?

Teresa: [laughs] Oh, that *is* the vibe! I don't think that she really wants that.

Travis: But that's the vibe that gives off, of like, "I thought this was gonna be way more interesting. And now, you guys are just being nerds together. Alright, you should go." [laughs]

Teresa: Well, but so— She works very diligently to— I wouldn't say assuage his guilt, but assure him that she doesn't need rescuing.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Because that is the— That's what he seems to kind of want to do, when he gets there.

Travis: Yeah. It seems like he's built up this image of her, based off of how he felt about her in the past.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Of "Sure, she might've misled me. But that's just 'cause she's a confused young woman who needs a hero to—" And she's like, "That's not the case. I'm perfectly fine. It's okay, don't worry about it."

Teresa: She's not *perfectly fine*. A quick google search will tell you that her ending is not very happy.

Travis: But she does, when she's like, "Hey, man. Let this go."

Teresa: Yeah. At this point, she's like, "Listen. You— It was fun. We had a fun time."

Travis: "That was fun, but [simultaneously] now it's done."

Teresa: [simultaneously] Now it's done. Thank you, Daniel Tiger.

Travis: As Daniel Tiger would say, yes.

Teresa: Yes. Um... [laughs] So he's like, "Uhh... Alright. I guess it's fine. It's all fine." And he still feels lost about it. He didn't get the kind of closure that he was really looking for.

Travis: And she's like, "Maybe take a look around. Maybe consider other options. Maybe Penelope?" And he's like, "What? Ah, no. She's just *my bud*."

Teresa: But also, she's like, "Maybe try and grow up a little bit?"

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Which I think helps for *later*. Desc— Like, kind of support him wanting to invest in the Featherington scheme.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Which we should talk about next!

Travis: And we will, right after a word from another Max Fun show!

[theme music plays]

Alexis: Hi! I'm Alexis. I am one of the cohosts of *Comfort Creatures*, and I'm here with River Jiu, who has been a member since 2019. Thank you so much for being a listener, and a supporter of our show.

River: Yeah. I can't believe it's been that long.

Alexis: Yeah! [laughs] Right? As the Max Fun Member of the Month, can I ask what sort of made you decide to be a member?

River: I used to work at a library. So I just used to listen to podcasts while I reshelfed all the books. It really helped with doing [through laughter] everything at work.

Alexis: [laughs] Yes.

River: So I just wanted to give back to what's been helping me.

Alexis: Yeah!

River: It feels good to be a part of that.

Alexis: As the Member of the Month, you will be getting a 25-dollar gift card to the Maximum Fun Store, a Member of the Month bumper sticker, and you also— If you're ever in Los Angeles, you can get a parking spot at the Maximum Fun HQ, just for you.

River: Yay! I'm actually going to LA in September.

Alexis: [gasps] Ooh!

River: So I'll get to use the parking space!

Alexis: Yes! Thank you so much, River, for doing this. This has been an absolute blast.

River: Yeah, of course! I've been so glad to be able to talk to you, too, and I'm so excited to be a Member of the Month.

Alexis: Yay!

Voiceover: Become a Max Fun member now at MaximumFun.org/join.

[ad changes]

Jeremy: Hey, everybody! I'm Jeremy.

Oscar: I'm Oscar.

Dimitry: I'm Dimitry.

Jeremy: And we are the *Eurovangelists*.

Oscar: We're a weekly podcast spreading the word of the Eurovision song contest, *the* most important music competition in the world.

Jeremy: Maybe you already heard Glen Weldon of NPR's *Pop Culture Happy Hour* talk up our coverage of this year's contest. But what do we talk about in the off-season?

Dimitry: The rest of Eurovision, duh! There are nearly seven decades of pop music history to cover.

Oscar: Mm-hmm! And we've got thousands of amazing songs, inspiring competitors, and so much drama to discuss. And let me tell you, the drama is juicy.

Dimitry: Plus, all the gorillas and bread-baking grandmas that make Eurovision so special.

Jeremy: Check out *Eurovangelists*, available everywhere you get podcasts, and you could be a Eurovangelist too!

Oscar: Ooh! I wanna be one.

Jeremy: You already are. It's that easy.

Oscar: Oh, okay. Cool.

[ad break ends]

Travis: Okay. So the Featheringtons.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Basically, they, since season one, have been struggling financially.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Eating a lot of potatoes.

Teresa: The baron has died, right?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: He had some very shady business dealings. He's dead. That happened at the very end of season one. And so, they are more-or-less adrift, and they don't really have the kind of money to continue with the way that their society works, right?

Travis: So, they've been scrimping and saving, reusing dresses, and un—

Teresa: Letting go of servants.

Travis: And unable to pay the dowry for the younger daughter.

Teresa: Philippa.

Travis: Or yeah, the middle daughter, Philippa. Who I like.

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: I think Philippa's great.

Teresa: And she can't really understand what's happened.

Travis: Not great like I'd want to be her friend, let me clarify. But great as a character.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Once again, another trope I like. When there's wicked siblings or wicked stepsisters, right, where it's just like, "This one's really mean. This one's just kind of an airhead, and she's mean in that way."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: [whispering] I love it.

Teresa: So like, she and Mr. Finch had an agreement...

Travis: They're so cute.

Teresa: They are so cute. And they *clearly* have feelings for each other. But Mr. Finch's family, rightly so, is like, "Hey. Let's get this— Let's keep it going." And Lady Featherington is like, "Hahaha. Um, we will."

Travis: "But we're in mourning!"

Teresa: "We will. But let's slow it down, a bit." Because they don't have any money.

Travis: So then, the new Lord Featherington shows up. And I believe he is the daughter's fourth cousin, if I remember correctly. So a distant relation, but the closest living male heir.

Teresa: Right. And we've talked a little bit about primogeniture, and about how inheritance works at this point in history. It is really... The females at this time, they are at the mercy of their relations.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: And so the Crown works hard to find that boy, right? Gotta find that boy, to get it. They take him— They find him in America.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: They go all the way to America bring him back. And—

Travis: And he shows up, and he's a *lot* younger...

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: ... than they were expecting. And I guess the dude who was his dad, or his uncle or whatever, who was supposed to do it, died.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And so now it's him. And *he* sweeps in, and they're like, "Our problems are solved!" But he's also like, "And I will have the servants move Lady Featherington's stuff out of her room. That's my room, now."

Teresa: Well, 'cause he's like, *ready*.

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: He's ready to be like, "I'm Lord Featherington, yo!"

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: And they think that he is rich, but he is not.

Travis: Well, 'cause he sweeps in. And one of the first things he does is pay Philippa's dowry, so she can get married to Mr. Finch.

Teresa: Right!

Travis: And it's like, "Okay, great. Everything's great." And he starts trying to woo Cressida.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Big shoulders.

Teresa: Cowper.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Cressida Cowper.

Travis: And Lady Featherington's like, "Mm. If that happens, Cressida's gonna roll up. Now, *she's* Lady Featherington. I'm out. I'm not gonna have any sway." So she starts coaching her *eldest* daughter to try to woo him.

And their fourth cousin's not... great? But there's a lot of distance, especially at the time. It wasn't the wildest thing.

Teresa: It is not unheard of, at the time. It was pretty regular.

Travis: Unfortunately, eldest daughter is completely inept.

Teresa: What's her name again?

Travis: Oh, I'm trying to remember! It's another P name. Uh... Persephone? No. Passion fruit. No.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I don't know! Hold on.

Teresa: Phil— Not Philomena, 'cause she's the younger one. It is... Philippa? No.

Travis: No, that's the one we would think.

Teresa: No, that's the one. That's the one. Lady Portia... Penelope, Philippa— Oh, no! Um... Prudence! Prudence.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: We got it. It's Prudence.

Travis: It's Prudence. But Prudence proves not good at seducing. She's very awkward.

Teresa: So Portia takes it into her own hands.

Travis: Mm-hmm. In the orangery!

Teresa: And compromises them in the orangery. And Jack is *furious*.

Travis: This is a thing I looked up, too, by the way. Because it's in all kinds of Regency stuff, and I'm sure Georgian and Edwardian too. This idea of to compromise, now we have to get married.

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Travis: It is a real thing that did happen, but not nearly as common as movies, and books, and TV shows and stuff make it seem. Like, the idea of, "Well, I walked in a room, and you two were in here together. So now, you gotta get married." [laughs]

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: It wasn't quite that.

Teresa: It's the literal trap. It's the marriage trap.

Travis: Yes. So this is where Jack, the new Lord Featherington, is like, "Hey, dummy. I'm broke. I was gonna marry Cressida to get access to their money. And now, we have no money."

Teresa: Well, because he had this idea for— He had this whole thing that he's been kind of slowly introducing about his ruby mines, right? In America?

Travis: I thought that was Lady Featherington's idea.

Teresa: No. No, no.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: He's been slowly introducing it, kind of hinting. And trying to see if people want to get inves— He's doing it very slowly, dipping his toes in, trying not to make waves. And *then*, Lady Featherington...

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: ... is like, "If we're gonna do this, let's *do* it." Right? "Let's jump all the way in. This is the way that we're gonna make the money. Those people, they— It's fine if we swindle them, because they laughed at us."

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: "And they have scorned us in society, and so let's take their money. Let's do it!"

Travis: And so the—

Teresa: And Colin gets involved in the investing. He is like, "Mm, I'll think about that," so much so that he even takes money out of the Bridgerton coffers that Anthony recognizes. Like, "Hey. Where did this go?" And Colin's like, "Don't worry about it." [laughs]

Travis: But Penelope is like, "You can't let him invest. You can't do—" And I would say even Portia is a little bit like, "They were— I mean, they have been nice to us. The Bridgerton's haven't been terrible." Right?

Teresa: No, they have.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: They—

Travis: Never mind.

Teresa: With the Marina thing, right?

Travis: Oh, right!

Teresa: If we go back to the Marina thing, they were going to, you know, merge their families. And then the second that Marina's virtue was brought into it, they would hands-off, like a hot potato.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Right?

Travis: So basically, the scam was, there's nothing in the mines. The mines are a bust, right?

Teresa: Because they don't have rubies in [laughs] Georgia.

Travis: But it would take so— Like, the amount of time it would take to send someone there, check it out, and come back, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: So instead, they're like, "Hey, don't you want to buy shares before they were all bought up?"

Teresa: Mm-hmm!

Travis: "Get in on this," right? So the idea being they would sell shares in the mine to these people, collect the money, and then... hoof it, right, before—

Teresa: Yeah. By the way, Penelope is not the only one who tries to talk Colin out of this. The Mr. Mondrich...?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Mon— The boxer from the first season.

Travis: But he gets in trouble, because Jack realizes from the throne fight, from season one, he's like, "Hey. I was going through my family's records, and I know what happened. So keep your mouth shut!"

Teresa: Right.

Travis: "Or I'll ruin you," and, "[grumbles]"

Teresa: Because he's trying to start his club, right? And he tries to warn Colin. And Colin's like, "Woah, step off, dude." And a bunch of his business falls off, because he's trying to not get people swindled, if anything.

Travis: It's also important to note, in this storyline, that at this point Jack is engaged to be married to Prudence. But he seems to have an interest in women of a slightly more mature age.

Teresa: Mm.

Travis: And he's trying to get with Lady Featherington.

Teresa: Yeah. And Portia is not dissuading him.

Travis: No. But she also doesn't seem wil— I think what she comes across, is very flattered, and sees the opportunity to once again be Lady Featherington, perhaps. But then, I believe it's Whistledown outs him? Or somebody outs him.

Teresa: Colin. So what happens is, at the Featherington ball, Colin and Penelope, Colin figures out that the rubies are not real. And he confronts Jack. Then, Portia figures out that the jig is up, right? And Jack is like, "Hey, it's fine. We have all their money, let's just *go*. Let's go to America." And she's like, "But what about my girls? I can't just leave them." And he's like, "Mm, but you could."

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: "You and me, we could just—"

And she's like, "No. This is not how this is gonna go." And she basically tears him a new one. And she's like, "No, *you're* gonna leave. And you're gonna leave me the money. And I'm gonna make a document that says that the first-born son to *my* girls is the new heir. You are going to disappear, or I'm gonna tell everyone it was you."

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: "It was all you, and no one would believe that a silly *woman* would be behind *any* of this!"

Travis: Nails it.

Teresa: So he leaves. And basically, they get away with it? Even though the Crown—

Travis: *Sort of.*

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I mean, in season three, there's an investigation.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And there's a lot of questions about, "Oh, you inherited this from an old aunt, or whatever?"

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: "Interesting. Hmm."

Teresa: It's not resolved, but they get away with it for now.

Travis: Yes. I wanna talk about Benedict.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: 'Cause Benedict in this se— One, there is a scene—

Teresa: Oh, the poor second son. You know?

Travis: Listen. Benedict? My favorite character. I cannot wait for season four. In this season, he has decided to go to art school. He submits his application, and he's very nervous.

Teresa: He was even nervous to submit.

Travis: Right. And so, to help him calm down, Colin presents to him, "Here's a special brew of tea that I have found in my travels at research."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And Benedict ends up taking a lot of this speciality—

Teresa: Oh, he— he slam-jammed it. [giggles]

Travis: And he is high as a kite.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And it's one of my favorite things I've ever seen in a show.

Teresa: Well, the Sharmas are there, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: During the visit before the ball that they hold, that their country is staying—

Travis: And he's staring out windows, and having a great time, and giggling to himself. And just have— It's one of those where, as an actor, there are moments when you get to just have so much fun in a scene. Where especially everybody else is doing something else, and they're like, "And *you* are just here to chew the scenery, and steal the scene." And it just is so much fun to watch.

He gets accepted into the school.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: He goes. And he seems to be having such a good time not just partying with himself, but just like, "These are my people," right? "I'm here, I feel like I belong."

Teresa: And he's *good*!

Travis: And he's good at it! He starts a fling with his model. And he seems really talented.

Teresa: Oh, and that's because Madam Delacroix rebuffed him.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: He was like, "Let's keep doing this thing, now that it's the next season!" And she's like, "No, I'm busy. I'm working."

Travis: This is— Oh, important. She starts working with Penelope, after Madam Delacroix figures out— like, sees Penelope going in, in disguise as the servant.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And she calls around. And Penelope's like, "Tell you what. You help me with this, and I will write about how great *your* dresses are, and how bad the competitors dresses are. And Lady Whistledown can help you." And they're like, "[clicks tongue] Great."

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: So they start working together. But so Benedict's at this school, having a great time, living that Bohemian lifestyle. And one of the guys at the school, I *think*, let slip. I don't remember it being...

Teresa: Malicious?

Travis: ... malicious. I don't think.

Teresa: I mean...

Travis: But more just like, you know, they're drunk, and doing some art. And he makes a quip or something about, like—

Teresa: I think that he is ribbing him, a little bit.

Travis: Yes. But it's not like, "I wanna fight you," or whatever, you know what I mean?

Teresa: No. I think you're right. I don't think that—

Travis: 'Cause I think he said something like, "It's a good thing you're talented, or whatever."

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: "I didn't think that would be the case when your older brother paid for you to be here."

Teresa: It's definitely an underhanded compliment.

Travis: Yes. And it reveals that, like... at least *part* of the reason – it's unclear how much of the reason – that Benedict got accepted to the school was because Anthony, as Lord Bridgerton, made a substantial donation to the school.

Teresa: Which is something that is rampant. Right?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: That's not an unheard-of thing to be doing, even really today, right? People give favors to things that are favorable.

Travis: Yeah! Now, what's interesting is, an... I find this writing, and the way that both actors acted, very interesting. Because I can see from both sides, right? Because Benedict takes it like, "You didn't believe in me enough, that I would be able to get in on my own merit. So you did this, and now I'm second-guessing everything. And I don't know if I have merit, or whatever."

But I can also see from Anthony's point of view of like...

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: "No, I *did* believe in you. I *know* you're talented, and wanted to

make sure you were able to have that chance." Especially since I think that there's a strong case to be made that Anthony sees, in Benedict, the freedom and choice that he does not get to have.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And not in a jealousy way, but almost like, proud that Benedict— That he can do that for him? That Benedict gets to have that.

Teresa: Mm.

Travis: And Colin gets to have that. And that was Anthony supporting him, in the way he knows how to do.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: But Benedict takes it as "You didn't think I could get in on my own. And now, it's tainted. Because who knows if I would have gotten in on my own?" It was supposed to be a moment for him, of validation.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Of like, "I got in on talent. I *am* talented, not just rich enough to make myself *seem* talented." So he ends up dropping out of the art school.

Teresa: And kind of floundering, a little bit.

Travis: Ugh.

Teresa: Poor guy.

Travis: Ugh! And I would say he continues to flounder *well* into the third season.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And it's kind of heartbreaking, because he *is* talented. And you see in him, like, a very gentle soul. A very loving, supportive guy who has a very artsy demeanor.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Right? And who probably would have done very well in that world, and really enjoyed himself. But he has such impostor syndrome about it, because— I think it's kind of the opposite of Eloise. Where he knows he is not going to be judged as harshly as somebody coming up from nothing.

Because he has so many connections, and his name and everything, that any kind of success he gets is like, "Well, was this because my work was good, or because people want to associate with a Bridgerton, and support a Bridgerton?"

Teresa: Yeah. I definitely feel you. That's for sure. But also, I think that he is also struggling against what society says that he should be doing. 'Cause as a second son, he's really supposed to either join the army or the clergy. Right? That's kind of what he's supposed to do next.

Travis: I would take it even one step further than that, which is in the context of the show especially, that until something happens to Anthony, there's *no* expectations on him at all.

Teresa: Right. As far as the Bridgerton line go.

Travis: Right. That it's just like, "No. You're doing exactly what you should be doing: nothing."

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And it's like, "Okay, but I *can* do stuff."
And they're like, "Sure you can, bud!"

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "Yeah! You have fun out there."

Teresa: Yeah, that's definitely what it comes across as in Bridgerton.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: But what I'm saying is, in the Regency period.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: He was expected—

Travis: A spare.

Teresa: He's a spare, so he's expected to either join the clergy or, in times of war, he's supposed to buy up a commission.

Travis: But you can really tell, especially this season, wherein Anthony is looking for a bride, there's *so much* focus on that. And everybody's like, "Ooh! Who's he gonna marry?" And these women are lining up to go on dates with him.

And meanwhile, there's *no* pressure on Benedict. Right? Nobody's like, "But what about Benedict? When will *he* get married?" Right? Nobody cares. Right? Because the line doesn't carry on through him, unless something happens to Anthony. So who cares, right? It's like, "Yeah, but—"

Teresa: Well, people tend to enjoy his presence at the balls and such.

Travis: Yes, absolutely.

Teresa: [giggles]

Travis: But the expectation of somebody being like, “Oh, *my* daughter— Oh, I want to—” It’s like, well, maybe there will be lines of women, once Anthony’s married.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Who would like to— But I mean, if Anthony’s still available, that’s what every mother is gunning for.

Teresa: That’s true.

Travis: And like, that’s... *debilitating*! Right? That idea of, like, “Yeah, you’re *fun*. But you’re not as important as your brother is.” You know?

Teresa: Right. Which is, I think, why he’s so keen on making something of himself in the way that he knows how. You know, the drawing.

Travis: Which is also why I think he enjoys that group of people so much more. Because when there are people who like to be his friends, and people who are interested in him romantically or physically, that it’s because there’s something there. They’re interested in him.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And not just a prospect of marriage, or “What money can I get from you,” or whatever, right? Even if that is the case, and he’s not seeing it, there’s still a, “Ah, but these people are *choosing* to be my friends. This person is *choosing* to spend time with me.”

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Right?

Teresa: So I want to talk a little bit now, here at the end, I want to talk about the setup for season three. So Colin and Penelope.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: At the Featherington ball, we get some really great stuff. We get the outing of Jack being the kind of, like— By Portia. We get Antony—

Travis: The discovery of Lady Whistledown.

Teresa: Yes, by Eloise.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: And we get Kate and Antony with the fireworks, and the kiss, and the, like we do, "Let's do this, even though society is against us." Right?

But also, we get, while Penelope is starry-eyed over Colin taking care of Jack, being like, "You need to get out of town," right? And they dance, like they do at almost every ball that they are together.

Colin still hasn't quite figured out what *he* wants to do, now that he doesn't need to save Marina, I guess? And he is trying to find his place among them. And he says some pretty disparaging things about Penelope. About how he wouldn't court her in his wildest dreams, or something like that.

Travis: He doesn't say that *to* her, though, right?

Teresa: No. He is saying it to the other boys. And she overhears.

Travis: Once again, I think...

Teresa: And she's devastated!

Travis: ... what we see in him, as long as I'm psychoanalyzing the brothers, that he very much wants to be perceived as quote, unquote "a Man," capital-M, right?

Teresa: Yes. Yeah.

Travis: So that's why he went to rescue Marina. That's why he talks about traveling, and brave adventures, and stands up to Jack in almost all—

Teresa: He has a real hero complex.

Travis: Right. No, I don't think a hero!

Teresa: Mm...

Travis: He wants to be a *grownup*. He wants to be a *man*, right? And in *his* mind, that's how he sees his father. That's how he sees Anthony.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: These people that people are like, "That's a man! A man stands up for people, a man rescues people, a man's there." Right?

And so I think part of the reason for his betrayal of Penelope in this moment is, he does see her as a child, in the way of "That's my younger sister's friend." You know? "And she's my friend, too. But my younger sister is younger than me, and a baby." Right? I think there's a lot of, "Ah, no. I'm a man, and I'll be with a capital-W Woman." Right? This idea.

Teresa: I mean, he's—

Travis: She seems very naive, and very like... You know, innocent to him.

Teresa: Well, he almost is like— I think he's protesting too much, right? He's obviously immature. He is *not* a man yet. And so, by trying to distance himself from Penelope, who *he* sees as immature to his friends, is what he's trying to assuage that part of himself that he doesn't like.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: And I— Do you see any of the inklings, the twinklings of their relationship? Or do you see it *all* as a little sister vibe? Because I see it! I see it in this. I don't think that I see it as much from him as I do from her, but he definitely seeks her out.

Travis: I think, my— Okay. From a directing criticism, I think they worked too hard to keep any chemistry from *his* point of view out.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Because I definitely see, you know, throughout season one and season two, her starry-eyed swooning over him. Right? But I think they were very careful to not be like, "He is also into her." Where they wanted to make it clear, he sees her as a friend. He sees her as Eloise's friend, right? The person he's always known. So there is *no* moment of like, "Oh, he's into her." Because that wasn't what it was— That wasn't the storyline yet, right?

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Which then leads to, when it does start happening, I'm like, "Where's that from?" Right? "He has not been— He has not had eyes for her *yet*, until *now*."

Teresa: I mean...

Travis: And there is a case to be made.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: For what they go for, which is like, "Oh! Now that she has started dressing in a way that flatters herself, and started behaving in a confident way..."

Teresa: Yeah. Thinking of herself *as* a woman helps people see her as a woman.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: But I'm reminded of when he first arrives— This time from his tour, not at the beginning of the next season. Where Eloise and Penelope are having tea, right? And talking about, maybe, suitors. And Eloise being like, "Wuh, bluh, suitors." And Penelope being like, "Well, like, maybe it could be fun?"

And Colin comes in, remember? And they have that lock-eyes kind of moment. I think that he reciprocates a *little bit* there.

Travis: I think he feels connected to her. I think he feels connected to her.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: And comfortable with her. Here's what I would say. Okay. Here's what I think the problem is. In season one and season two, the chemistry between the two leads, between the two characters, was passionate. Right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: That was the flavor of it. I think the chemistry we see between Colin and Penelope in season one and season two is vulnerability from Colin.

Teresa: Okay!

Travis: Where I think that is the connection that he has with her, that he feels *comfortable* with her. That he is mostly— He is, at most, his true self when he is with her.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Not in a passionate way, though. I don't think he *wants her* in that way, because he doesn't know what love is. Right? He has a manly,

passionate idea of love. But for *him*, what he needs is vulnerable... you know, "I feel myself with you."

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And we see that—

Teresa: Like an understanding. Because he doesn't really know himself very well.

Travis: And we're getting into season three here, a lot. But I think that is what we see develop over season three, is that falling away of what it means to be the man in the relationship.

Teresa: The *facade*.

Travis: Right. Falling away of that, and being like, "But what does it mean to just be vulnerable with someone? And to support them, instead of wanting them to just support you?" And all that stuff.

Teresa: So let's leave that—

Travis: Which we'll talk about more— Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah! For the next Shmidgerton!

Travis: We'll talk about that more in Shmidgerton 3!

Hey, everybody, thank you so much. Thank you for listening. Hey, everybody. If you're listening to this on Friday, or even if you're not, new season of *Great British Bake Off* has started. And we will be doing *Bake On*.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Again, that is our *Great British Bake Off* discussion podcast where we will watch and discuss each episode as it comes out. There may be some

days in between, depending on how tours and travel and such go. But you can find that, just search for *Bake On* in your podcast platforms. And if *you* know someone who loves *Great British Bake Off* too, make sure to tell *them* about it.

I'm going on tour again... [groans]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I'm excited. To Texas next week, the 12th through the 14th. We're going to be in Austin, in San Antonio, doing *Adventure Zone Versus Hercules* and two *My Brother, My Brother and Me*s. You can go to bit.ly/mcelroytours for those tickets and information.

Teresa: I think what you mean is, travel is hard, but performing is a pleasure.

Travis: Oh, I love— I *love* touring. I miss my own bed.

Teresa: Yes. That's—

Travis: I wish that I could teleport back into my own bed at night.

Teresa: That's it.

Travis: Thank you to our editor, Rachel, without whom we could not do the show. Thank you to our researcher, Alexx, without whom we could not do the show. Thank you to you for listening. We could do the show without you— [stammers] But I don't want to!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: 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.

And as always, we are taking your topic submissions, your questions, your queries. Hey, if you have a favorite Regency romance novel that you want to suggest to me, send that in! Shmannerscast@—

Travis: She's had to start rereading them, folks.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Please! We need new ones.

Teresa: I have my favorite authors, and everyone does. So I'd love to learn about your favorite author. Send those to 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]

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