

## Shmanners 479: Salem

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**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 on this chilly October morn?

**Teresa:** Well, you know, it finally feels like fall!

**Travis:** It does! I'm finally ready to put out our outside Halloween decorations.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** But two days before the event. *Boy, hue-hue...*

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** We haven't watched a lot of spooky movies.

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** The girls aren't really into that.

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** No...

**Teresa:** Maybe they'll be more into Christmas movies?

**Travis:** Oh, they'll definitely be into Christmas movies. There's a lot less monsters in those.

**Teresa:** Yeah. I mean—

**Travis:** Not that they—and here's the thing, I want to make it clear, they're not scaredy cats!

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** They don't like tension!

**Teresa:** That's it. They like the zombies movies.

**Travis:** They love the zombies movies! But the idea of like watching another character be scared—

**Teresa:** Yeah, they don't like it.

**Travis:** They don't like that. So, if we were—even like ParaNorman, they'd be like, "Oh, this is uncomfortable. Why are they being mean to that kid?"

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Do you know what I mean? That, they wouldn't be down for.

**Teresa:** Maybe we should show them Frankenweenie? Because they really liked The Nightmare Before Christmas.

**Travis:** That's true! That's true. But I have been watching—I've been watching a lot of spooky history—

**Teresa:** Oh, yeah?

**Travis:** Videos, and—

**Teresa:** It's spooky lake month, on TikTok.

**Travis:** Spooky lake month, of course. Creepypastas.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** More creepy pasta literary analysis, is—

**Teresa:** Creepy paper?

**Travis:** Creepy paper? Ah...

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** And that's kind of actually, in a rare occurrence, related to—not the creepy paper part, but like the creepy history part.

**Teresa:** Yeah, a little bit.

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

**Teresa:** Well, this might be a first for Shmanners. We're talking about a town, a city, a place, instead of a person or an idea.

**Travis:** Or a thing, or a mineral, or a vegetable.

**Teresa:** [chuckles] We're gonna talk about Salem today.

**Travis:** Home of the Sanderson sisters!

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** Is that—that takes place in Salem, right?

**Teresa:** Yes, that movie takes place in Salem.

**Travis:** That's what I meant. You know I don't think... you know I know that Hocus Pocus isn't real.

**Teresa:** *Hm?* I thought I knew that. But I wasn't sure. [chuckles]

**Travis:** Wow! Wow, maybe that's the spookiest thing to happen all month.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** My wife isn't sure if I know that movies aren't real life.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** Even though I know, Teresa, some movies are documentaries, and those are real life, I know that Hocus Pocus is not a documentary.

**Teresa:** Even a documentary is a skewed lens.

**Travis:** Well, now you're blowing my mind. Okay! All right...

**Teresa:** Okay. Well so, Salem is kind of, it's the tale of two cities really, right? So, we've got the historical Salem, and then we've got the current Salem, which is... kind of leans into their history in a different way.

**Travis:** The PR version.

**Teresa:** I mean—

**Travis:** The rebranded—

**Teresa:** Sure. I wouldn't say rebranded, because they definitely want, especially visitors, to recognize the duality of Salem.

**Travis:** Yeah, but when a town is famously known for the persecution of people—

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** And then they're like, "And now it's the capital of that." And it's like, well, hold on—

**Teresa:** I mean, okay, let's start from the beginning.

**Travis:** And no shade on Salem. I want to visit very much. I hope I haven't burned any bridges.

**Teresa:** No, I don't think so.

**Travis:** It's just, when I say rebrand, that's what I mean.

**Teresa:** So, the town of Salem, Massachusetts, has a population of about 45,000 people, covering an area of about 18 square miles. This is approximately the same size as Huntington, West Virginia.

**Travis:** There you go. Both equally famous, I would say. Both equally well-known. Maybe one was because of historical significance, one is because of like a famous podcasting family.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** It's hard to say it, but I think that they're equal in many ways.

**Teresa:** Well, Salem gets over one million tourists a year.

**Travis:** I mean, we're doing Candenights in town for the first time in a while, so... I don't know how many people are going to show up for that show, but it might be a million?

**Teresa:** I hope so.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** And so, the vast majorities of those listeners come in the fall—sorry, those visitors. [titters] They might listen to—

**Travis:** They listen to the leaves fall.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** They listen to the owls hoot and the wind blow.

**Teresa:** They come to live their Halloween dreams, right? Because, like I said, Salem kind of leans into the witchiness at this point. But often, people go for the witchy vibes, and they leave a lot more educated, and they leave a little more, I don't want to say... they are more thoughtful about the town. That's what I want to say.

**Travis:** Okay?

**Teresa:** Because there's some pretty horrific history when you look up close. And the reason why, you've heard, all of you listeners have heard—

**Travis:** Okay, I thought you were talking to me, and I was like, yeah, no, I know.

**Teresa:** [chuckles] Is because of the witch trials in 1692. But it's—you've probably heard some inaccurate things about it too. One of the ways that Travis and I, and a lot of people familiar with *theater* know about the Salem witch trials, is through the show *The Crucible*.

**Travis:** Right. But that's a fictionalized telling of events.

**Teresa:** Yes. There are some names—

**Travis:** And it's not a documentary play.

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** I don't even know if those exist.

**Teresa:** I don't know. It is dramatized.

**Travis:** The Giles Corey part is real, though, right?

**Teresa:** He did get crushed, yes.

**Travis:** And called more weight as he was being—having stones piled on top of him, and his last words were "more weight."

**Teresa:** There are differing accounts, but—

**Travis:** How dare you. Don't even call that into question, it's my favorite moment in the play, and it doesn't even happen on stage. Hey, Arthur Miller, if you're listening—

**Teresa:** Okay. [chuckles]

**Travis:** And I bet you are. That is such a cool moment of a man who has been accused of a thing that he didn't do, and he's being told to confess as they're like piling stones on top of him to make him confess, and then his last words are "more weight." Show it! Do it! Put it in the show, coward. [titters] Not Neil Coward, Noël Coward? Noël Coward.

**Teresa:** Right, no, Arthuer Miller—

**Travis:** Niel Coward was—Niel Coward was Noël Coward's brother.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** They didn't get along well.

**Teresa:** Anyway, and there's nothing wrong with wanting to visit Salem. But the thing is, you want to be able to straddle the line of enjoying the town, while also respecting the history, right? So, let's go over a couple of the facts.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Salem is most recognized for being a town where the kind of accusations and the mania of the town of witchcraft ended the lives of twenty people, each one dying in their own horrific fashion. The events took

place from February 1692, to May 1693, and these are known as the Salem witch trials. It's agreed today that these cruelties committed in Salem were the result of Puritan paranoia, misplaced fear of the supernatural, religious fervor and a corrupt justice system.

**Travis:** All of it with an intertwining of like misogyny as well.

**Teresa:** Certainly.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Certainly. So, here's the scene. Salem was settled in 1626 by a group of Puritans. And we've covered this a little bit, they hate everything fun.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** And the reason that the Puritans settled this town are the same that they settled several towns across the eastern seaboard.

**Travis:** They wanted the religious freedom to be more religious and controlling.

**Teresa:** Right. They felt that the break with the Catholic Church, resulting in the Church of England, did not go far enough away from Catholicism. And they—they were like, "No, we need to completely get rid of all of this stuff."

**Travis:** Yeah. It's just always so fun to me to point out that—because like as a kid, you're taught like, oh, yeah, the Pilgrims came for religious freedom.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** And that sounds like, hey, yeah, it was too restrictive over there. But no. [titters]

**Teresa:** Wrong.

**Travis:** They were—they were like, "Hey, they—sometimes they dance, and that's gross. So now we're going to move across the ocean, to make sure nobody ever has fun anymore."

**Teresa:** They were Bible literalists. Literalists?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** There it is. Specifically, the King James Bible. That is the reason why they did things like outlawing dancing and musical instruments, and Christmas.

**Travis:** Even though, as *Footloose*, the musical, would point out, dancing is not a crime. I could do the whole... quote/unquote 'rap,' spoken word version.

**Teresa:** You sure could.

**Travis:** But I won't, I'll save it.

**Teresa:** Salem, in 1692, was a very difficult place to live, okay? There were the expected hardships of colonial life, right? The constant threat of disease and starvation. But also, an enormous concern about other people living in the area. People like French settlers, right?

**Travis:** Mm-hm.

**Teresa:** Who were vying for this land as well. People like the indigenous people of the area, who were kind of like, "What are you guys doing here?"

**Travis:** Understandably so!

**Teresa:** Right?

**Travis:** Yes!

**Teresa:** And so like, with these stresses, life in Salem was very strict and isolated. Even neighbors within the same village had tense relationships, okay?

**Travis:** The other thing, not to excuse any of this at all, whatsoever, but it's also important to note, when we look back with a lens of like what we understand now regarding psychology, you know, medicine, botany, all of these things, right? So much of it is like, why would you assume this, when it's clearly this happening, right?

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** But these were also people who didn't have that context. So oftentimes, when something would go wrong, when somebody got sick, when crops failed, when an animal died, any of these things, superstition was the first and most like reasonable thing to them to jump to.

**Teresa:** Right. And on top of all of that, it was one of the coldest and fiercest winters on record, forcing the population of the village even deeper into isolation. We're talking like could not get out of your house kind of cold, all right? January of 1692, two young girls began experiencing symptoms that no doctor at the time could explain. Abigail Williams and Elizabeth Betty Parris, the niece and daughter of Reverend Samuel Parris, were 11 and 9 years old.

**Travis:** They're key figures in The Crucible.

**Teresa:** They really are. And the girls were waking in the night and screaming, okay? On top of these screams, the girls complained of skin conditions, and they regularly experienced intense, full-body, quote, 'seizures,' right? Where their bodies would painfully contort. The town doctor, a man named William Griggs, was called in to see if he could do anything. And basically, this guy, who... a product of his time, doctors... they were just dudes with the audacity. Really, they didn't have a lot of, let's call it knowledge. [titters]

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** The same way that doctors—

**Travis:** Not a lot of book learning!

**Teresa:** Doctors do today. He was basically like, "Eh, must be a witch."

**Travis:** Yeah. This is also a lot of these things too, because we have—there's a lot of quote/unquote 'supernatural' historical stories, of like we—once again, easy to run through the lens now of, these are clearly kids, you know, teenagers, whatever, who like took a bit way, way, way, way, way too far, right? And we see that now. But when you have something like that, that isn't a... observable like symptom of a thing, right?

**Teresa:** Sure.

**Travis:** This isn't like, "And they had nosebleeds," or—and they, you know, like lesions.

**Teresa:** Well, I do want to stop you there. I mean, it is possible that one or both of the girls were experiencing night terrors.

**Travis:** Mm-hm.

**Teresa:** Which is something that usually younger children than that go through, where there is a kind of... kind of a brain glitch almost while you're sleeping, where sleep paralysis kind of gets mixed in there. And sometimes you're not fully awake, but you are awake. You seem awake to other people, like your eyes might be open, you might be able to talk or say something kind of gibberishy. But like, it can be quite jarring to see someone who doesn't seem to be in their right mind. They should be asleep, but they're not. That's one of the theories.

**Travis:** Let me—and let me—when I say observable, I don't mean, and they were faking it.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** Across the board, all the—but I just mean like, when you see someone who has an infection, an infected wound—

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** You can say like, "Ah, that's the problem."

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** Right? Whereas if it was something like, say, epilepsy, right? A doctor with no training and no context is like, "Hm, their brain is cursed." Right? Like they're not—

**Teresa:** Which is something that happened a lot with epilepsy throughout history.

**Travis:** Yes. I bet Sawbones has done a great episode about that.

**Teresa:** They surely have. But because of the Puritan interpretation of the Bible, they were taught that the Devil was very real, right?

**Travis:** Mm-hm.

**Teresa:** And that he was constantly tempting you, to lure you into his clutches, right?

**Travis:** And that guy loves dancing in the woods, apparently.

**Teresa:** Apparently.

**Travis:** People are dancing with him in the woods *constantly*.

**Teresa:** That's the big part of The Crucible.

**Travis:** Everybody's dancing in the woods!

**Teresa:** Yup.

**Travis:** And you would think, he's the Devil, very powerful. Dance? Ah, cool, what about a nice place? Why are you dancing in the woods?

**Teresa:** [chuckles] So, the idea was that the Devil would work through human agents, right?

**Travis:** Okay, but we can all agree, right? Even if all of this was true, the idea that you have this powerful, evil Devil, right?

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** Super powerful. And he would be like, "But I gotta sneak around. I can't just walk in the middle of town and corrupt everybody." Why wouldn't he just do that? Why is the Devil—what's the devil afraid of them doing?

**Teresa:** I think it's more—

**Travis:** Arresting him?

**Teresa:** I think it's the point of sowing chaos, right?

**Travis:** You know what's very chaotic if you're the Devil? Walk in the middle of town!

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** And be like, "Hey, what's up? I'm the Devil."

**Teresa:** But things started to get—

**Travis:** "What are you gonna do, fine me?"

**Teresa:** Well, here's the weird thing, right? The condition started to, quote, 'spread,' right? And we still don't have an agreed opinion upon why this happened. Some people say that the well water was polluted, or that there was a specific black mold on the corn that made people hallucinate. Some people—

**Travis:** Or just could be psychosomatic.

**Teresa:** Yeah. Some people believe that the girls were faking their afflictions en masse, right?

**Travis:** Well, there's—there—between—

**Teresa:** And we'll never know.

**Travis:** Between those two, though, right, it could be one kid actually had like night terrors and epilepsy, or whatever.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Right? And as you're talking about like, "I have been cursed. There is evil working upon me," and somebody working themselves—it might not be intentional faking, right? But they're like a kind of secondary kind of reaction to that, where you work yourself up into such a fervor, you believe you feel that way too.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** Right? If somebody near you is like, "My scalp is so itchy," right? And won't stop talking about it. And you start to feel that like tingle in your scalp, right? That kind of thing.

**Teresa:** Absolutely. Four of these girls had someone to blame for this, right? They provided their community with names of those who were, quote, 'afflicting' them with witchcraft, right? And interestingly, three people that they were—that were accused, were all women.

**Travis:** Hm.

**Teresa:** And were known to be the black sheep of their community.

**Travis:** Hm! So easily believable, one might say.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** There's already a prejudice against women.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** And then also, the otherness of them.

**Teresa:** Yes. A couple of these include Sarah Good, who was a pregnant mother of a young daughter. She was the first arrested. Another was an enslaved woman named Tituba. A third woman was arrested, Sarah Osborne. Sarah Osborne had not only recently been absent from church services, but she was also currently suing the family of one of the people who accused her.

**Travis:** Hm! How strange! Also, once again, if I'm the Devil and I want to sow chaos, I'm not going for the others! I'm going for like the mayor's wife! I'm going for the mayor! They've got influence! They're the ones that are gonna bring other people in! Ah, who wants the people on the outskirts of town? I want to get the good ones. I want to corrupt the minister! You know what I mean?

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** That's who I want to—I'm the Devil! Why am I going after low-hanging fruit?!

**Teresa:** I appreciate this perspective.

**Travis:** I'm just saying! That's not what the Devil would do. But you know what the Devil would do? I don't know. But what we're gonna do, is be right back after our word from another Max Fun show.

[theme music plays]

**Jackie:** Jackie Kashian, hi. And welcome to the maximumfun.org podcast, the Jackie and Laurie Show, where we talk about stand-up comedy! And how much we love it, and how much it enrages us.

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[break]

**Alex:** Most of the plants humans eat are technically grass.

**Katie:** Most of the asphalt we drive on is almost a liquid.

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**Alex:** And at [maximumfun.org](http://maximumfun.org).

[break]

**Travis:** Okay, I'm back.

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Travis:** And Teresa is too. We're both back.

**Teresa:** We're back.

**Travis:** A Dinosaur Tale.

**Teresa:** Back again. Okay, so, at first, Tituba claimed that she had never hurt Abigail or Betty. But pressure mounted, right? She was pressured to confess. And—

**Travis:** And of the three, the one who probably is in the most danger here, right?

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** Because the other ones are white, and like one of 'em's a mother, right? One of 'em's a member of the town. As opposed to, this person who does not have any of the same claims to that like kind of circle, and all that stuff.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** So, Tituba was definitely under the most pressure to confess.

**Teresa:** And so, she claimed that the Devil made her do it, and that Osborne and Good pushed her to carry it out, right? So like, that she was— she was a victim here too, right? Which I think makes a lot of sense, psychologically speaking, like you said. We don't know what kind of pressure she was under, or what could have possibly had a hand in this, but we—

**Travis:** I think we can—

**Teresa:** But we—

**Travis:** We can assume.

**Teresa:** We do assume that there was lots of coercion and other types of tactics to get her to confess. Osborne and Good both maintained their innocence until the end. Osborne died in prison after her family actually turned against her. And Good, so, Sarah good was tried, convicted and hung for witchcraft. And so, the idea was that this was only the beginning, that they had stumbled upon this kind of like plague upon their village, or whatever, right?

And so, each week, more and more people were accused of witchcraft. And because of their church's teachings, the trials were basically just the accused confessing, right? This idea that, you know, if you turned away from God, you could turn back to it, and we could just punish you a little bit, right? But that never really happened.

**Travis:** There is also—and there's a reason Arthur Miller chose this story as an allegory for like the communist trials.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** And the problem with this inherently is, when—if someone were to say to someone like, "This is wild. This is obviously not true." Then the response of, "Hm, sounds like something someone in league with the Devil would say."

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** Right? Like you couldn't—like it was so recursive that the idea of like, if you deny it, it makes you guilty, right? And guilty by association.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** And so, it rewarded people for going along with it, to avoid any—like any kind of speculation falling back on them.

**Teresa:** So, by the spring of 1693, over 100 people had been jailed. 14 women and 6 men had been executed for witchcraft.

**Travis:** Which is also, at the time, think about the population of what Salem would have been at the time.

**Teresa:** Exactly.

**Travis:** And they say 100 people?

**Teresa:** It's a lot.

**Travis:** You're—so basically, this town seems like it's more witches than not, at this point.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** And nobody went, "Wait a minute. Statistically speaking, there's no chance all these people are witches."

**Teresa:** Right. And the panic continued to spread throughout neighboring communities, and only properly came to a stop when the wife of the governor was accused of witchcraft.

**Travis:** Huh. Funny how that works.

**Teresa:** That's when the trials were suspended, and the arrests were halted. But, I mean, obviously, a lot of damage had already been done. Like I said, this is a very—

**Travis:** So very telling!

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** That it reached that point and the governor went, "Well, wait a minute. Now, hold on, guys. I think now that many, many people have died and other people's lives have been ruined and imprisoned, and... I think it's gone a little too far now that my wife's been accused. Let's be cool, everybody."

**Teresa:** Mm-hm. This is the quickest overview of these trials, right? There's tons of sources available that are more thorough than us, and we highly recommend you check those out. But it's safe to say that the history of Salem is pretty tragic, right? And should not be referred to flippantly. This is the duality that I'm talking about, right? Because that doesn't mean that you shouldn't go and enjoy the town.

Salem doesn't shy away from the history, and many of the quirks and delights of the town are based in the fact that the entire community now

celebrates the archetype of witches. And so, you know, if you ever have a chance to go, I think that as long as you keep that in mind, it's a great place to go and visit. So, if you ever plan on visiting Salem—

**Travis:** I also think, this is another reminder, too, just as long as we're covering it—because I think at this point we've talked a lot about like, "And these people weren't witches, and witches, that's—" Blah, blah, blah, right? It's also important to note that, one, a lot of iconography of witches in general comes from like we talked about with ale wives last week.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** And like there's anti-Semitism connected to it, there's like misogyny connected to it. There's a lot of like othering connected to it. But also, there are many practicing Wiccans and people who identify as witches that exists today, right? And this idea of it being a thing that has been horribly maligned throughout the centuries. And it's something like, when we talk to our girls and like they are interested in the idea of witches, or we talk about witches, we try to give that context.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** Of like, yeah, but here's why it has been treated—like the fact that they get talked about in like the same breath as like werewolves, right?

**Teresa:** Exactly.

**Travis:** And like mummies and stuff. [chuckles] And it's like, well, no, there are people who identify as witches, but it's not that, right? This isn't—that's not—we gotta teach you why they're treated like Hollywood monsters.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** And not like how they actually exist and function in the world.

**Teresa:** Exactly. So, a way to honor the scary history and also enjoy spooky season, right? In Salem.

**Travis:** Because I would also point out that one of the big takeaways from Salem is the scariest monster, is people.

**Teresa:** Yes. Before your visit—

**Travis:** Because it scared people.

**Teresa:** Oh, yeah. Yeah, totally. Before your visit, read up on the witch trials and learn the names of a few key players, especially the victims. And if you're planning on visiting some of the historical sites or the museums, which there are a lot, right?

It will help if you ask informed questions to better understand the complicated narrative of the trials. The locals always appreciate you taking time to understand the history before you visit. So, while you're doing your research, look out for some common misconceptions. Jessica Parr told the Northeastern Global News that five of the most common myths about the trials are, one, that everyone accused were women.

Obviously, like we said, misogyny played an enormous factor, but that erases the men that were also accused, like you spoke about at the beginning there. Two, Salem is the only place where this happened. And that's a myth as well, because Salem is famous for the amount of trials and executions.

However, plenty of other New England communities have their own dark tales of killing innocent people under the guise of them performing magic, right? Third, the trials were because of superstition left unchecked. The answer is much more complicated, as we've explained. So, it was more at their core about scapegoating societal problems, than they were about keeping the community untainted by magic, right?

**Travis:** Yeah, it was more of under the guise of superstition, trying to put blame. And listen, here's the thing—

**Teresa:** Put blame on the outsiders—

**Travis:** It's a thing that, this might shock you, folks, still happens today!

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** Where it's like, "Hey, we could deal with the complex root of these issues and go through a multi-step plan, and make investments into fixing the actual problems that are causing this. Or we could point fingers at someone, and you can all get mad at them instead of me."

**Teresa:** Mm-hm. Another myth is that the witches of Salem were burned at the stake. No. Women were definitely burned at the stake, but that's much more of a European practice. Nearly everyone who was killed for witchcraft in Salem was murdered by hanging, with the notable exception of Giles Corey, who was crushed to death.

The magic in Salem today looks—the myth is that the magic of Salem today looks anything like the magic that would—people have been accused of, right? This is what you were talking about, right? Jessica Parr wants to bring attention to the fact that today's witchcraft is very much a product of our times. The Puritans were not reading Tarot cards or making astrology charts. Witchcraft of today has a lot more to do with the reclamation of spirituality.

Where witchcraft in the 1690s was like the living manifestation of evil through a person, right? So, totally different. Like, it's called the same thing, but they're totally different. So, when you go, behave appropriately for the places that you visit, right? You've got some cool historical sites and museums. You've also got old movie sets and a statue of Samantha from *Bewitched*.

**Travis:** Whoa!

**Teresa:** So, you know—

**Travis:** And like if you go to a bar and they have some fun, witchy-themed drinks, have fun with it!

**Teresa:** Right!

**Travis:** You can be—you can be respectful and have fun at the same time.

**Teresa:** Exactly. And always remember that this is a real town. People really live here, they go grocery shopping, they take their kids to the park, right? So like take pictures of places, not residents, and don't assume that every person on the street is ready to act as your personal tour guide, right?

**Travis:** That's true anywhere, by the way.

**Teresa:** Exactly. Speaking of which, here is a few tips and tricks from a Salem local. Number one, the Salem locals, they say that, quote, "You are not the descendants of the witches they didn't burn." That's very cringy, right? First, they weren't witches. They were terrorized Puritan people, who were tragic victims. Second, they weren't burned, they were hanged. Actually, at a place that is now a Walgreens drive-through. Right there. So like, you know, that's not something that that is appreciated there. Also—

**Travis:** Not appreciated to claim to be a descendant of something?

**Teresa:** Of a—there is a kind of, I wouldn't say a meme, but it is...

**Travis:** A widespread claim.

**Teresa:** Yeah, a claim... it's easily digestible on T-shirts, right? To say that you're descendants of a witch that didn't burn. I don't know if you've seen this on T-shirts or whatever?

**Travis:** No, okay, but now I'm parsing what it is. Okay.

**Teresa:** Right? It's a way of kind of like centering yourself in the tragedy of the Salem witch trials.

**Travis:** Got it.

**Teresa:** That's what I mean. So, decenter yourself. This is not about you. Most Salemites feel protective of the victims of the trials. So, anyone who's lived there for more than a couple of years knows about it. They know the names, the stories, and feels the—they feel the tragedy, right?

I mean, it's a big Halloween party city, right? But there's a separation that you need to be very clear on, between the human tragedy that happened in 1692 and the roundabout history that brought us into Hocus Pocus and Bewitched, right? And some residents wish that they would get rid of the whole witch city thing altogether. But jokes about like hanging or burning are in poor taste.

So have some fun with Winifred and Samantha, but leave the jokes about Giles Corey and Bridget Bishop out. Let's see, what else? The locals say absolutely enjoy the three historic cemeteries, they are incredible. But it's not like a tourist park, it's not an amusement park. So, don't sit on the stones or touch them, or—

**Travis:** Take things.

**Teresa:** Take things. They're not a place to rest your legs or enjoy your snacks, or whatever, right? Be—

**Travis:** It's not a set, right?

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** It wasn't—it's not a haunted house prop. That is a graveyard. It is a cemetery, where people are buried.

**Teresa:** Yeah. Remember that it's a town, so, don't sit on people's porch steps or pick flowers from their garden or look into their windows, right? This especially happens in the Hocus Pocus house, right? The exterior of a real house in real Salem was used in the movie. But it's not a tourist attraction, it's a residential neighborhood that people live in. So don't like knock on the door or look in the windows or, you know, any kind of stuff. It's—

**Travis:** I think I can summarize all these! It's not an amusement park that was built for fun. It's a place where people live.

**Teresa:** Exactly. Exactly. Especially, they take parking very seriously. They use license plate readers to quickly catch and ticket and tow violators who

are parking on resident-only streets, okay? So do not park on those. Your car will not be there when you get back.

**Travis:** Like magic!

**Teresa:** [chuckles] There's no possible way for every one of the 10,000 plus visitors in a day to park in Salem. So, find another way to get there, bus or rideshare, or whatever, right? Be very careful about parking. Make sure that you soak up the history, be kind to the retail workers and tip generously. Have a good time!

**Travis:** Hey, everybody, thank you so much for being here. And before we get to the regular thank yous, I wanted to let everybody know that we are right now running an audience survey, for Shmanners, and the link will be in the episode description. And if you could take a minute, or two or three, to fill it out, it would be helpful for us. And it's—you know, we're considering a couple changes to the show, like future topics, all that kind of thing. So just go there, like I said, link is in the episode description, take that survey. Make your voices heard. I also want to let everybody know, like I said, we're doing Candlenights live again in Huntington.

**Teresa:** Woot-woot.

**Travis:** It's going to be in-person, December 6<sup>th</sup>, at seven PM Eastern Time. And we're also going to be streaming the video on demand of it later. And your in-person ticket includes that virtual stream ticket. The video on demand premiere will be December 19<sup>th</sup>, at nine PM Eastern Time, and we'll be in the chat. And then the video on demand is available through January 4<sup>th</sup>.

All benefits of the show will be donated to Harmony House, which seeks to end homelessness in the Huntington area through permanent housing and supportive service programs. Tickets for both the in-person and the video on demand are available at [bit.ly/candlenights2025](https://bit.ly/candlenights2025), that's two-zero-two-five. [Bit.ly/candlenights2025](https://bit.ly/candlenights2025).

Thank you to our editor, Rachel, without whom we could not do this show. Thank you to our researcher, Alexx, without whom we could not do this

show. And thank you to you for listening! We could do the show without you, but that would just be like dancing in the woods for no audience.

**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 Pin-up Photography for the cover picture of our fan-run Facebook group, Shmanners Fanners. If you love to give and get excellent advice from other fans, go ahead and join that group today. As always, we're taking your topic submissions, your questions, your idioms, your queries. Send them all to [shmannerscast@gmail.com](mailto: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?

["Shmanners Theme" by brentalfloss plays]

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