

## Shmanners 500: Kentucky Derby

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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:** It's Max Fun Drive week one.

**Teresa:** It is, woo!

**Travis:** Man, I wish I could do a good air horn sound.

**Teresa:** [spoofs an air horn sound]

**Travis:** Mine's like—[spoofs an air horn sound]

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** Mine feels more like a little dog yapping. [spoofs a small dog barking] You know?

**Teresa:** Who's that one, there's a comedian who was on Taskmaster—

**Travis:** Jess?

**Teresa:** Who could do a really good air horn.

**Travis:** I wanna say Jessica...

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** Thorpe. I think it is Jess something.

**Teresa:** Look it up on the internet, you fools.

**Travis:** Anyways.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** It's Max Fun Drive. It's the time of year where we come to you and say, hey, do you like this show and other shows on Max Fun? The second part's not as important as the first part. Because if you like this show, maybe consider supporting it by becoming a Max Fun Member, by going to [maximumfun.org/join](http://maximumfun.org/join). And there you will choose a membership level that is right for you, starting at just \$5 a month.

There's also \$10 a month, \$20 a month and up. And the majority of the money that you give each month will go to us, while I think it's something like 20 or so percent, something like that, goes to Max Fun, to help them keep the lights on and pay their staff. And the rest goes to support the art and artists you care about.

So, if you're somebody who listens to Shmanners every week and never misses an episode, or even if you do miss an episode but you're still glad it's there when you come to it, go to [maximumfun.org/join](http://maximumfun.org/join) right now while you're thinking about it. Don't miss your chance to become part of the magic. [Maximumfun.org/join](http://Maximumfun.org/join). I also just realized—

**Teresa:** Great job!

**Travis:** That was so—

**Teresa:** That was amazing!

**Travis:** Professional.

**Teresa:** You did such a good job.

**Travis:** I was like a pitcher throwing like a perfect game, and I just had to keep going and not think about it.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** I've done this now—

**Teresa:** I was over here staring at you in awe.

**Travis:** I've done this for 15 years—

**Teresa:** You've done such a good job.

**Travis:** I hope I know what I'm talking about at this point. And we've done so many Max Fun Drives, hopefully—

**Teresa:** And we are so privileged to be able to continue to do Max Fun Drives, you guys. Thanks.

**Travis:** At \$5 a month, this—I'll talk more about the other membership levels later. But right now, I just want to point out, at \$5 a month, you get access to bonus content from all the shows on Max Fun, from every year we've ever done Max Fun Drives.

**Teresa:** It's awe-inspiring.

**Travis:** It's hundreds and hundreds of hours. And this year, the Shmanners Max Fun bo-co episode was Teresa and I doing a deep dive analysis and reaction to *Zombies*, the first—*Zombies* movie from Disney, Disney Channel original movie, talking about our favorite characters, the implications, the story.

**Teresa:** The allegoriness.

**Travis:** All of it. And I believe the episode's like an hour and a half long. It is as long—

**Teresa:** It's very long. [chuckles]

**Travis:** As the movie itself.

**Teresa:** We might as well had done a watch along and commentary—

**Travis:** But even that, we would've—

**Teresa:** Because those—

**Travis:** We would've just—

**Teresa:** Exactly the same.

**Travis:** Paused so much just to watch it.

**Teresa:** Oh, really? You think?

**Travis:** You don't think? We would've been singing along the whole time.

**Teresa:** We would have been singing. But there were times in between songs, at least a few minutes. [chuckles]

**Travis:** So, if you are already a member or want to become a member, do so, and then you can listen to that bonus content and all the other ones, [maximumfun.org/join](http://maximumfun.org/join). But that's not what we're talking about today. What are we talking about today?

**Teresa:** Not today, but soon, the Kentucky Derby will be happening. We're gonna talk about that—

**Travis:** I need to start training!

**Teresa:** [chuckles] You do. You're way behind. If you're gonna win that derby—

**Travis:** This is the year.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** This is the year where not only I win, but I show, human beings, faster than horses.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** We just haven't been trying hard enough.

**Teresa:** So, let's give a brief history of the horses.

**Travis:** You guys know horses? Well...

**Teresa:** If they were to wear pants, which way would they wear pants?

**Travis:** There's an obvious answer to that, right?

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** It would be half a—like to—around their middle. Not around their long middle, but around their regular middle—

**Teresa:** So, their front legs don't get to be in the pants?

**Travis:** No, those are their arms?

**Teresa:** I don't know. Anyway—

**Travis:** Because if they wore 'em the other way, the pants would just fall down? Because their butt, we know where their butt is, and butt has to go inside the pants.

**Teresa:** I think that the pants have to come all the way up to their neck.

**Travis:** You think it's like a full-body, like a jumpsuit?

**Teresa:** [chuckles] It's like a sack.

**Travis:** But I don't think...

**Teresa:** I can't even get through this without—

**Travis:** I don't think pants, by definition, have to contain your legs, but they do have to contain your butt. Because you can wear shorts. You can wear short shorts! Right?

**Teresa:** I can't, I can't anymore!

**Travis:** But your butt's gotta be in it.

**Teresa:** Please just let me talk about the Kentucky Derby. I'm sorry I brought it up!

**Travis:** It's just that I'm so right in this moment, I didn't even know how right I was until I started talking about how the horse's butt would have to be in the pants. And I was like, wait, I'm onto something!

**Teresa:** This is a Pandora's box. I did not mean to open.

**Travis:** Pants-dora's box.

**Teresa:** *Oh!* Okay, please let me continue?

**Travis:** Hey, if you think I'm right about where pants should go, or if you think I'm wrong, go to [maximumfun.org/join](http://maximumfun.org/join) to support the show today.

**Teresa:** Okay. The Kentucky Derby is very American. Not because horse racing is American, because it's not, but because of the way that it is tied to Meriwether Lewis Clark Jr.

**Travis:** Of Lewis and Clark?

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** Wait, there's a lot of names in there.

**Teresa:** The literal Lewis and Clark, of the great expedition—

**Travis:** Had a son together.

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** Oh.

**Teresa:** The grandson of William Clark is Meriwether Lewis Clark.

**Travis:** I bet that was so confusing for people when he was like, "Yeah, I'm the grandson of Clark Meriwether Lewis Clark." And they're like, "Wait, which Clark—wait, what? Who are you?"

**Teresa:** William. William.

**Travis:** I'm just saying, it kind of sounds like he was also the grandson of Lewis?

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** What if they had a daughter named Louise Anne Clark? And it was like Anne as a middle name.

**Teresa:** Louise Anne... Louisianne? I don't know.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Okay, so—

**Travis:** Just wanted to go down a fun kind of imaginary road where—okay.

**Teresa:** I didn't understand.

**Travis:** I know. I didn't either. I didn't either, but I didn't know where I was going with this. But they didn't know where they were going either when they explored this great country of ours.

**Teresa:** Yup... In 1872, Meriwether Lewis Clark Jr. traveled to England, which is where they did horse racing at this time, right? He visited Surrey, where the annual horse race, simply referred to as "The Derby," had been running every year since 1780.

**Travis:** That's a long time!

**Teresa:** It was a very influential—

**Travis:** I mean, it wasn't a long time at that point.

**Teresa:** Not at that—

**Travis:** No.

**Teresa:** But, I mean, 100 years or so.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** It was very influential to him. In fact, he went to Paris next to enjoy the Grand Prix de Paris.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Another race. He was like, "This is amazing. I love this, this racing thing. I love racing almost as much as I love my pistol."

**Travis:** Interesting. Now, is this perhaps a Chekhov's gun?

**Teresa:** A little bit.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** So, when he got back to the States, he was like—

**Travis:** He married his pistol.

**Teresa:** He was like, "I'm gonna bring the ponies here so I can bet on my ponies."

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** He went back to Kentucky.

**Travis:** I've heard of it, yes.

**Teresa:** Which is known as the Bluegrass State. Now, what do you know about bluegrass? The grass. The bluegrass.

**Travis:** It's native to Kentucky?

**Teresa:** No, it's not.

**Travis:** It's a kind of music.

**Teresa:** No—well, yes, but not this.

**Travis:** Horses love to eat it.

**Teresa:** Horses do love to eat it! It is not native, okay? But it—

**Travis:** I think I actually knew that.

**Teresa:** It is excellent for horses. They love it. It is a deep blue-green color, and it doesn't make good hay, but it does make good pasture, right? Because it's highly nutritious, very palatable, and holds up well, even when frequently grazed upon.

**Travis:** Mm-hm.

**Teresa:** It forms tight sod when it grows, because it has a very shallow root system, which provides good pasture footing, okay? They love to stand on it,

they love to eat it, and it's good for them. It is commonly referred to as meadow grass, and it is native to Europe, North Africa, and parts of Asia.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** It came over with English settlers. So—

**Travis:** They brought some grass with them?

**Teresa:** They did.

**Travis:** That makes a lot of sense.

**Teresa:** All right, back to Meriwether—

**Travis:** I mean, it doesn't make sense, we have grass here. This very much feels like, "Honey, we have grass at home. We don't have to bring grass with us."

**Teresa:** [chuckles] "But this is special! I need this grass!"

**Travis:** "Honey, we have grass."

**Teresa:** "No."

**Travis:** "We have grass at home."

**Teresa:** "You don't have this grass at home."

**Travis:** "Our grass is just as good. Our store brand grass is just as good."

**Teresa:** "It's not as good. It tastes different."

**Travis:** "I told you to stop eating the grass, honey."

**Teresa:** Back to Clark Jr. Okay, as it turns out, his father wasn't the only one with a fancy title. His mother also was one of the first families of Kentucky, the Churchills.

**Travis:** Get out of the town! I, until this moment—listen, can I be vulnerable for a minute?

**Teresa:** Yes

**Travis:** In my innocent stupidity.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** My brain just went, "Winston Churchill. I don't know. The owner was a big fan."

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Like that, like I've never really thought about it in a deep way. Like I really only have one reference to the name Churchill.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** And it's Winston Churchill. So I was just like, I don't know, maybe they wanted to sound, you know, classy and European, so they named it after Winston Churchill. Anyway. And I just moved on.

**Teresa:** Yup. But also, yeah.

**Travis:** Winston Churchill came from America. They shipped him over to England. This is what you're saying, right?

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** Oh.

**Teresa:** No. But some of his family settled in Kentucky.

**Travis:** Oh, okay.

**Teresa:** So, he was particularly close with his cousins, John and Henry Churchill. And so, when he returned from England, the idea of building a racetrack in Louisville, his cousins were like, "Yes. Yes, please."

**Travis:** I'm willing to bet—my mom was from Kentucky, and I have—that section of family—a lot of Kentucky experience. I'd be willing to bet they pronounced it like "Chur-chill."

**Teresa:** Maybe?

**Travis:** If they didn't say Churchill, they'd be like, "Oh, the Chur-chills."

**Teresa:** So, Louisville was up and coming, okay? With farmland cropping up. And it became a destination with the bluegrass—

**Travis:** Still one of my favorite cities. I love Louisville.

**Teresa:** It's great! It became a destination for people who are interested in equine activities.

**Travis:** Yeah, so they—I don't know—I don't think it's Kentucky. Why? But I know in Louisville, they have like horse statues all over the place.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm. All over.

**Travis:** So like, we have pig statues here in Cincinnati, and I think Huntington started doing trains or buffalo, something like that.

**Teresa:** Something like that. And so, when he came home from Europe, he organized the Louisville Jockey Club and the Driving Park Association, to raise money to build a high-quality racing facility just outside the city. It was originally named for the foundation—was just called the Louisville Jockey Club. But after seven years of being open, the track began to be referred to as it's named today, Churchill Downs.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Named after John and Henry Churchill, Meriwether Clark Jr's

cousins, who provided the land for the racetrack. The naming wasn't official until 1937. But if you said either Louisville Jockey Club or Churchill Downs, it was the same thing people knew—

**Travis:** I bet by 1937, Clark Jr. was dead. Or else he'd be like, "Guys, this was actually all my idea. So, what do you think about Clark's Place?"

**Teresa:** [chuckles] Well, I'll tell you—

**Travis:** Clark's Cool Track!

**Teresa:** I'll tell you a little later about why Churchill Downs, instead of Clark's Place.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** So, on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1875, a little over 10 years since his return from England and his like "yes, let's go race horses," the first Kentucky Derby was held at Churchill Downs in front of a crowd of approximately 10,000 people.

**Travis:** That's a lot of people! I thought, you know, it's fairly new, that it would be like 20 people were there, right? "It wasn't that big of a deal at the start, but look at it now!"

**Teresa:** The jockey's name was—

**Travis:** Especially amazing, if you've never been to a horse race, we've gone to see some horse racing at Churchill Downs. Each race—the day is a day.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** But each race is like a minute long.

**Teresa:** They say that the Kentucky Derby is a sprint, but the day is a marathon.

**Travis:** Yeah. And so, if you're like, "Hey, 10,000 people, do you guys want to show up for like interspersed one minute of entertainment at a time? But then you can just hang out and do whatever." And they're like, "Sounds great."

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Could we do that at live shows? What if we started saying like, this is going to be more of a social gathering, and we'll do one minute of comedy. And then take like 15 minutes off, and then do another minute. And in between, you can grab some drinks, there'll be a buffet, you can talk to— I'm going to revolutionize this whole thing.

**Teresa:** That's less like a live show, and more like...

**Travis:** A human derby?

**Teresa:** Almost, I would say, like a ball?

**Travis:** You could bet on which brothers make the best jokes.

**Teresa:** Ooh, interesting.

**Travis:** I'll win.

**Teresa:** [chuckles] All right, so, the jockey's name was Oliver Lewis, who had a colt named Aristides, who had been training under another famous hall of famer, won the very first Kentucky Derby. The same horse would win second place in the Belmont States, which is a different race later that year. And since he's the very first winner, a bronze statue of the beloved horse still stands at Churchill Downs today.

What we have to mention at this point is, in the 1800s, horses, including race horses, were cared for, trained and exercised by black caretakers in the antebellum slave holding states. These stable keepers were the ones whose, their expertise laid the groundwork for racing standards today. And since jockeying at the time was considered an unsuitable activity for white men,

black jockeys dominated the derby. Until it became lucrative, and then white people took over, which is kind of—

**Travis:** Yeah, sounds about right.

**Teresa:** The story of the United States.

**Travis:** In general! I mean, from the time we got here and on!

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** "Oh, there's money to be made here? This has always been ours!"

**Teresa:** Exactly. Black jockeys are the reason that we even have the Kentucky Derby at all. This is the story of Churchill Downs, the name.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** In the beginning—

**Travis:** It was Churchill Ups, and then they realized it was lower than everything else.

**Teresa:** [chuckles] No.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** But the brothers figured that they would act as kind of like the shareholder like financial backing, right? And Clark would act as the president and like the site manager.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** But we mentioned the pistol.

**Travis:** [hah] Gasps.

**Teresa:** He had a habit of solving his problems with his pistol.

**Travis:** Yeah, that sounds about right.

**Teresa:** Yeah. And so, it was not cool, for about a million reasons, most of which it really generated a lot of negative publicity. So, they decided to, instead of like willing it in perpetuity to the Clark family, the Churchills were like, "No, this is actually—this is actually ours. We don't want you—"

**Travis:** Yeah, we don't go around shooting people when they "wrong us" or hurt our honor, or whatever.

**Teresa:** Right. So then, there were other things that kind of made it a little more difficult. There was a horse gambling boycott, and then they turned their backs on the black jockeys, right? So, that was contributing to its struggling nature, but things started to look up in 1902, when the track was bought by a syndicate led by a Kentucky businessman named Matt Winn.

And so, this is the reason that Churchill Downs and the Kentucky Derby as we know it is the way it is today. Because Matt Winn, at the time he was working as a high-end tailor, and one of his clients asked if he wanted to be involved in the reorganization and management of Churchill Downs, and he was like, "Yeah, okay."

And so, because he had a general love of horse racing and he was kind of in with the right people, it all started to like click together. He served as the first vice president of the board and was mainly in charge of like the catering and like the summer entertainment of 1914. And he was listed as the general manager of the Louisville Jockey Club. And this is when people were like, "Hey, this is the place to be—"

**Travis:** Yeah, much more of a social thing.

**Teresa:** "We love it here." Right? And they started making a profit. And they were like, "Matt Winn, we love you. You're bringing in money, that's amazing."

**Travis:** So, would you say without Matt Winn's support, the racetrack wouldn't be what it is today?

**Teresa:** Absolutely.

**Travis:** So, in many ways, it's kind of like how Max Fun Members have supported Maximum Fun and Shmanners to help make it what it is today.

**Teresa:** Indeed.

**Travis:** By going to [maximumfun.org/join](http://maximumfun.org/join), and becoming a member at a membership level that they feel comfortable with.

**Teresa:** Yeah!

**Travis:** Yeah! Because that's how it works, folks! Here at Maximum Fun, the shows are owned by the people who make them. We own Shmanners, Max Fun is there to support us, and you are there to support Max Fun, and us through them. Max Fun itself is co-op run, and it's a very, very rare model in podcasting and in anything.

It's not something that I'm familiar with anyone else doing. This idea of like the decisions that get made for the shows and everything are made by us while still getting the support of the network. We are proud members of Max Fun, we have been since the creation of this show. And My Brother, My Brother and Me has been on Max Fun since 2011, I believe.

And we are big, big fans. Personally, I love talking about Max Fun Drive every year, because it's a chance for us to remember like we wouldn't be here without the support of the listeners and how much that support means to us. And it's a reminder to us how much our show means to people, that they're willing to support the show through Max Fun. And so, all that mushy stuff aside, what do you get? What do you get for becoming a member? Besides—

**Teresa:** Warm, fuzzy feelings.

**Travis:** Yeah, the warm, fuzzy feeling in your heart.

**Teresa:** Supporting your favorite artists and the thing that—your friends in your ears.

**Travis:** And knowing that you're better than the people who don't support the art and artists they love.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** Now that there's a—we get it. You might not be able to, right? And if you're not able to support us financially, listening means a lot to us as well.

**Teresa:** And spreading the word! If that's all you can do in this economy, that's okay.

**Travis:** We get it. But if you're able to become a member at \$5 a month, then you get access to, like we said, hundreds of hours of bonus content, not just from this year, not just from Shmammers, but from all the shows on Max Fun, from every Max Fun Drive we've ever done. There's so, so much. For Adventure Zone this year, we did a bonus episode where I sat down with Henry and Bebe and Dot and Charlie and Cooper, and they designed a dungeon. And then I ran it for Dad and Griffith and Justin, and it was bonkers.

**Teresa:** And you devised one of the best mechanics I've ever seen in a D&D game—

**Travis:** Well, the—

**Teresa:** But you'll have to listen to find out.

**Travis:** Yeah, there were many things that the kids were like... they just—like, the boys will just need to know this.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** So, I added a mechanic... No, I'll tell! It was—

**Teresa:** You'll tell 'em?!

**Travis:** Yeah, that you would roll to realize things.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** Oh, you realize you need to use that in order to—yeah, because otherwise there was no—

**Teresa:** Was no way. [chuckles]

**Travis:** Making it through it. Now, at \$10 a month, you'll get access to all that bonus content, as well as getting to choose from a Max Fun show-specific keychain. The—

**Teresa:** Ooh, keychains. The kids, they love keychains.

**Travis:** They're beautiful. And the Shmanners one this year is the Midnight Honey Friendship Society, I think it is? Or the Midnight Honey Society, something like that. Where it is based on Rachmaninoff bringing some honey at midnight and wanting to be friends with, I think, Stravinsky, that we talked about. It's one of my favorite weird stories of friendship like, "Hey, I heard you like honey, so I brought you like this five-gallon jar of honey. Are we friends now? Yes, it is midnight, sorry about that."

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** There's lots of other levels, 20—at 20, you get the keychain, you get the bonus content, you get to choose between a very cute toiletry pack or an embroidered visor. There's stuff up to 35, 50, all kinds of different levels.

**Teresa:** But there's also in between the levels, right? There's a boost option.

**Travis:** Correct. So, at this time of year, we also encourage you to consider upgrading your membership, like if you're ready to move from 5 to 10, or 10 to 20, this is the perfect time to do it and get those rewards. But if you're not ready to move between memberships, but you still wanna give a couple more bucks to support every month, you can boost your membership. You

won't move up to the next level, but you will have that fuzzy feeling of knowing like--

"I gave a little bit more because I could, to support the shows that I love." All three of those options, becoming a new member, boosting, or upgrading your membership are available now and count towards the overall total of the Max Fun member count that we have going through the Max Fun Drive. And during this time, we also have a bunch of special streams and events, and all kinds of stuff.

**Teresa:** Get together.

**Travis:** Yeah. You can follow McElroy Family on Instagram, and find out all about the stuff there. But we're basically streaming on The McElroy Family YouTube every weekday for the two weeks of Max Fun Drive. So right now, while you're thinking about it, go to [maximumfun.org/join](https://maximumfun.org/join) and become a member, upgrade or boost your membership now. Back to the show!

**Teresa:** Yes. So, Winn, he was a brilliant marketer. He understood that people didn't just want to come to the racetrack, like you were talking about, right? It wasn't just about those two minutes at the racetrack. They wanted stories, they wanted romance and drama, and they wanted to feel *fancy*.

**Travis:** Yeah!

**Teresa:** Right? It was—

**Travis:** It's become a place to see and be seen.

**Teresa:** Yeah, it was the vibe that he was curating. And Matt Winn was like, "This is what I will get you." He evolved it into a premium event, right? And it was starting to get famous on a global stage. In 1915, he convinced multimillionaire sportsmen Harry Payne Whitney to ship his highly-rated filly all the way from New Jersey to Louisville to compete in the derby. Whitney agreed, and his filly, hilariously named Regret, not only won the race, but was the first filly to ever win the Kentucky Derby, and currently one of the only three girl horses that have ever won the Kentucky Derby.

**Travis:** Breaking the glass pasture!

**Teresa:** I know, right?

**Travis:** The glass bar? Wait, hold on. The glass... what would be a ceiling for horses? Sky?

[both chuckle]

**Travis:** The glass sky? Okay!

**Teresa:** Barn door?

**Travis:** Sure! Yeah, that's better.

**Teresa:** Yeah, okay. The next big thing to happen to the derby was kind of an accident.

**Travis:** Cyber horses.

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** But—

**Travis:** We don't need those! If you're listening, I don't want my horses cyber!

**Teresa:** Nope. The hats.

**Travis:** Oh?

**Teresa:** So, the iconic hats that show up at the derby actually are an import from England, okay? Where at the time it was polite and proper for the ladies to wear a hat to the racetrack, because it was a sunny, sunny activity.

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Teresa:** And you wanted to wear your outdoor hats to shade your faces, and things like parasols were discouraged, because they limit visibility of the people behind you.

**Travis:** Oh! Okay!

**Teresa:** So, you had the hats kind of as like a—well, they do this in England to give shade to people, so everybody's gonna wear a hat. It's what we're gonna do. Even all genders wear the hats.

**Travis:** Wear the hates.

**Teresa:** Also, Clark, in the 1870s, was responsible for draping the roses, which is another thing that happens at the derby. Roses had become a prop in the winner's circle, and then they started giving the bouquet to the winners, and then they started making a garland for the horse.

**Travis:** Thank you!

**Teresa:** And by—

**Travis:** The horse is a big part of why they win! I'm saying the horse should get prizes too. I don't know if horses can eat roses, but I hope they're allowed to.

**Teresa:** Probably not. I mean... I don't imagine they taste very good?

**Travis:** Maybe it should be like clover or something the horses wanna eat.

**Teresa:** Yeah, but by now—

**Travis:** Can they eat clover?

**Teresa:** Yeah, they can eat dry—like fresh clover.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Yeah. By now, it is now a blanket of roses that is placed on the winner, and that is made up of 564 rose blooms.

**Travis:** That's a lot of rose blooms.

**Teresa:** That's a lot of rose blooms. All the other traditions that you can think of pretty much were under the watch of Matt Winn, okay? The gambling, right? He lowered it from a \$5 buy-in to a \$2 buy-in, and the mint juleps. This was actually in the 1930s, mint juleps were all the rage, particularly with rich people, because you needed a silver or a pewter glass—

**Travis:** Also, they take forever to make! There's a lot of labor in—listen, I'm only half joking—

**Teresa:** They do. You have to muddle.

**Travis:** Because the thing is, a lot of, especially at that point in the 1930s, leisure cla—right? Being able to say like, "I don't have to work," right? "I can wait around. I'm not in a rush." So it's not like, "Pour me a shot. I take the shot. I'm trying to get drunk quick." Right? This is like, "I sit around all day drinking, take my time—" You know? Like, "We can wait. I'm in no rush. I have nowhere to be. I'm rich enough that I don't have to do anything. It's hot outside. I wanna just sit around lazily. I don't have to work." The mint julep is perfect for that.

**Teresa:** You're right. It started out a little differently, though. Pre-prohibition, a julep was basically any kind of like sugary, syrupy drink that would be sold at general stores to help people take medicine, okay? So, you would take the julep—

**Travis:** It's the spoonful of sugar.

**Teresa:** It is. You would take the julep and then you add the "medicine," which was usually—

**Travis:** Booze.

**Teresa:** Boozy.

**Travis:** Or cocaine.

**Teresa:** Sure. The mint was an additive to that for upset tummy. Pretty cool. When prohibition was repealed, the upper class loved the sweet and strong drink, and loved to drink it at breakfast, actually. It was a breakfast cocktail.

**Travis:** Interesting.

**Teresa:** It was called an eye opener—

**Travis:** Not for me, but...

**Teresa:** Because the mint was very strong, right?

**Travis:** I guess.

**Teresa:** It's supposed to wake you up, I guess.

**Travis:** I mean, I'd rather have a very spicy Bloody Mary in that case.

**Teresa:** Sure.

**Travis:** Especially if I don't have anything to do for the rest of the day and I can alternate between taking naps and bathroom breaks!

**Teresa:** And at this point, they were usually made with rum, but Matt Winn was like, "What if we make it with Kentucky bourbon?" And—

**Travis:** Because that's where we are!

**Teresa:** Because that's where we are.

**Travis:** And it seems like it would be a lot easier to get.

**Teresa:** And cheaper.

**Travis:** Yeah!

**Teresa:** A very famous Polish actress named Helena Majewska ordered the drink and adored it so much that it became a staple at the pre-race brunch. And people loved the glass too. In fact, they were served in the little silver glasses, and patrons would slip them into their bags and take them home as souvenirs. So, Matt Winn was like, "Let's make it a souvenir thing and just charge for the cup."

**Travis:** Yeah, it's a good call, Matt.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Nailed it.

**Teresa:** Totes.

**Travis:** If people are gonna steal, just make 'em buy it.

**Teresa:** Yup. And so, it continued to flourish, and he made it a kind of like VIP event, right? So, you had like the tiers of people who would come and it was like—

**Travis:** And the tears of people who couldn't come.

**Teresa:** [chuckles] A see and be seen kind of event, right? And he did such a great job that the governor of Kentucky awarded him an honorary title of Kentucky Colonel in 1937! And they got—

**Travis:** And then he became Colonel Sanders.

**Teresa:** No, he didn't. He was never Colonel Sanders.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** But he did get on the cover of Time Magazine, which was cool. He served as the president and general manager of Churchill Downs for 47 years.

**Travis:** That's a lot of years!

**Teresa:** Yup. And when he died, he was the only person in history to have ever attended every single Kentucky Derby.

**Travis:** And they still bring his skeleton today?

**Teresa:** No, they—

**Travis:** So that he's at everyone.

**Teresa:** They don't, that would be weird.

**Travis:** Just his skull. And when the horse wins, they drape the horse in roses and put the skull on top of the jockey's head?

**Teresa:** No. [titters]

**Travis:** How certain are you they don't do that?

**Teresa:** Pretty certain.

**Travis:** But not 100%?

**Teresa:** I guess not. [chuckles]

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Ew.

**Travis:** So, I guess I'm right.

**Teresa:** Anyway, this year, the Kentucky Derby is on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, and it's estimated that over 155,000 people will show up to Churchill Downs. Everyone will be there in their Sunday best, and their hats, and they'll—

**Travis:** Their big hats.

**Teresa:** Place their bets, and they'll drink their juleps.

**Travis:** I bet a horse wins.

**Teresa:** Pretty certain.

**Travis:** You gonna take me up on that?

**Teresa:** Yup!

**Travis:** It might be a donkey. Do you know all the horses that are competing?

**Teresa:** No? But I don't think that a donkey is the same as a racehorse.

**Travis:** Well, that kind of disbelief is what makes my Disney Channel original movie so inspiring.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** This donkey dreamed of being a racer. There actually, I think, is one called Stripes, with a zebra?

**Teresa:** Oh, really? I was gonna mention—

**Travis:** Where the zebra wants to be a racehorse?

**Teresa:** I was gonna mention Secretariat.

**Travis:** Oh, sure.

**Teresa:** From 1973.

**Travis:** His heart was so big.

**Teresa:** What? His heart?

**Travis:** Isn't that the one? Or is that—wait, what's the—what's the one I'm thinking of? No, yeah, hold on...

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Travis:** You keep going.

**Teresa:** Well, I'm just gonna—

**Travis:** Seabiscuit!

**Teresa:** Seabiscuit.

**Travis:** Seabiscuit was the one I was talking about!

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Travis:** Where I believe when they did an autopsy—

**Teresa:** But that's—

**Travis:** Of Seabiscuit later, like he had an enlarged heart.

**Teresa:** Oh? Interesting.

**Travis:** Which they believe helped him run faster.

**Teresa:** Only 18 horses have ever won the Triple Crown, which means that they won the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness Stakes, and the Belmont Stakes. In the entire history of the Kentucky Derby, since 1875, only 13 horses have ever won.

**Travis:** And one of 'em was Secretariat. The first one?

**Teresa:** 1973 was Secretariat, and then Justify in 2018.

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Teresa:** Those were the recent—those are like some really celebrity horses, I guess.

**Travis:** I bet Secretariat paid a lot to—was Secretariat a boy? Secretariat was a boy, right?

**Teresa:** Yeah. Most of them are boys.

**Travis:** Paid a lot to stud, I bet.

**Teresa:** Probably.

**Travis:** I mean, they don't pay the horse. What's a horse gonna do with money?

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** I'm sure they paid the owner.

**Teresa:** Yes, the owner.

**Travis:** I hope Secretariat got the benefits of being of an expensive stud, though.

**Teresa:** Sure!

**Travis:** Like a cool barn with like it's on TV and stuff, and a mini fridge.

**Teresa:** What would a horse do with a mini fridge?

**Travis:** Keep their carrots fresh.

**Teresa:** Carrots don't actually need to be—

**Travis:** Apples?

**Teresa:** Refrigerated, they're root vegetables.

**Travis:** Soda?

**Teresa:** [chuckles] All right, if you want to go to the derby, or if you just want to go to Churchill Downs, here are some things, okay? The derby especially is best dressed with a kind of, think Sunday best with like a spring flair.

**Travis:** If you're gonna do it, do it You know what I mean?

**Teresa:** We're talking seersucker, linen, bright blazers are encouraged—

**Travis:** Get into it.

**Teresa:** Bow ties, pocket squares, cocktail dresses. And everyone, like I said, everyone at the derby wears a hat. If you go to regular races at Churchill Downs, you don't have to wear a hat, but at the Kentucky Derby you have to wear a hat. Everyone. Straw fedoras, boater hats—

**Travis:** Oh yeah.

**Teresa:** With trim. Those are great. Wide-brimmed—

**Travis:** Wizard's hat, really tall.

**Teresa:** I wouldn't recommend really tall hats.

**Travis:** Fair enough.

**Teresa:** I would say wider brimmed is better because you do want it for more like the shade, right? Although at Churchill Downs, and we've been, there are several levels, and some of the areas are covered, right? And if you don't have an incredible, beautiful hat, there are milliners all over town who will sell you one. It's kind of like a thing, right?

**Travis:** Sure!

**Teresa:** Obviously. Do remember that it is a sporting event in the comfortable, Kentucky heat, so do wear comfortable shoes that are, you know, stylish as well, right? But a lot of people end their day in flip-flops.

**Travis:** Fair enough.

**Teresa:** They start out in their fancy shoes and they bring other shoes. Do remember that you can't leave Churchill Downs and return on the same ticket, you have to buy a new ticket in, because it's all enclosed.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** And be mindful of your bag size. They do not allow purses larger than 12 by 6 by 12, along with backpacks and luggage. So, you want a smaller purse and a pocket, right? Or a belly bag or something.

**Travis:** Or if you've got a big enough hat, get a wide brim on it, and then you can keep stuff in your hat.

**Teresa:** Hm, that's less secure than you would think.

**Travis:** Yeah, well, you would have to Velcro it on.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm... Bring cash. Buying drinks and souvenirs, you can go on the card, but if you want to bet, you need cash.

**Travis:** There are ATMs there.

**Teresa:** Yes, but on the derby day, I'm sure that there will be very long lines.

**Travis:** Sure, and you're probably gonna pay some fees on the ATMs as well.

**Teresa:** Probably. Keep your betting tickets safe, because lost tickets are not honored at the Kentucky Derby. Also, remember there's no smoking, so like, you know, just go without your cigarettes, I guess.

**Travis:** Yeah, don't smoke there.

**Teresa:** I suppose if you needed to smoke, you could leave, but then you have to buy another ticket, because if you leave you have to buy a new ticket. Stay hydrated. Like I said, it's in the middle of the hot Kentucky summer. Well, not middle of the summer, but it is warm.

**Travis:** Yeah, warm out there!

**Teresa:** [chuckles] So, drink your bourbon and enjoy your cocktail, but stay hydrated. And like I said, you aren't allowed to bring an umbrella. It's very sunny, or hopefully it would be sunny, it would—it might also be rainy at this time of year. But like I said, you're not allowed to bring umbrellas, so ponchos are great. You could buy one of the seats that's undercover. And the races are like two minutes.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** So, if you're out in the rain for like two minutes, that's okay, right?

**Travis:** But if it's gonna rain, don't wear white.

**Teresa:** Sure. You're also not allowed at this point to bring selfie sticks or tripod cameras, or other large camera equipment. You can take your cell phone photos and a small digital camera, right? Because everybody's kind of like looking in the same direction for two minutes, they don't want things to get in the way of people looking.

Same thing with flash photography. This is bad for the horses, right? Some we don't want it to be a safety hazard for them. No refundable or repurchasable tickets, because so many people are going. And there's also no Wi-Fi. There's unpredictable cell phone service, because it was built in the 1800s. [chuckles]

**Travis:** Mm-hm.

**Teresa:** It's not very easy to do that, but you know—

**Travis:** And it messes with the horses' navigation.

**Teresa:** Doesn't it? Those cyber horses—

**Travis:** Yeah, the cyber horses.

**Teresa:** Yeah. [chuckles] That's a great call back.

**Travis:** Thank you.

**Teresa:** But you know, dress up, enjoy the vibe, and have a really great time! We went there with the kids and they had a good time—

**Travis:** No for the derby, mind you.

**Teresa:** No, no, no, not for the derby, just for a regular racing. There's—

**Travis:** It was my birthday!

**Teresa:** It was! There was some great food, and the kids loved walking around and seeing the horses. They have a really great kind of like parade area that they show all the horses in before the race, and you can like wave at them. You can't touch them.

**Travis:** No.

**Teresa:** But like you can see them. And there's all kinds of like little staircases and ways around to see things, and—

**Travis:** It's great!

**Teresa:** It's really great shops and stuff. So, enjoy!

**Travis:** Hey, one last time, want to remind you that it is the Max Fun Drive. It only lasts for two weeks, so you'll hear us today and next Friday talking about it. And that's when our episodes come out, so it's the only time you're gonna hear Shmanners talking about it, during those two weeks. So, if you are a fan of Shmanners and you want to support us, go to [maximumfun.org/join](http://maximumfun.org/join), right now while you're thinking about it.

Find a level that works for you. If you are already a member, consider upgrading your membership, or boosting your membership to give a couple extra dollars a month. [Maximumfun.org/join](http://Maximumfun.org/join). It means the world to us, we couldn't do the show without your support.

Thank you guys so much for everything you do for us, and thank you to our editors Rachel and Gino, without whom we wouldn't be able to make the show. And thank you to our researcher, Alexx. We couldn't make the show without you. Thank you to you for listening, your support literally makes the show possible, whether it's just by listening or being a max fund member. [Maximumfun.org/join](http://Maximumfun.org/join). 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 it that group today. And as always, we are taking your topic submissions, your questions, we had someone send in a biography suggestion. Anything you'd like to hear us talk about, send those to [shmannerstcast@gmail.com](mailto:shmannerstcast@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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