

Shmanners 503: Molly's Route 66 Adventure

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[theme music plays]

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

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

Travis: And you're listening to Shmanners.

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette.

Travis: For ordinary occasions. Hello, my dove.

Teresa: Hello, dear.

Travis: How are you?

Teresa: Doin'! All right! You know, summer. Summer is coming.

Travis: Summer!

Teresa: It's 75 and muggy out right now.

Travis: *Gross.*

Teresa: And the children just finished their penultimate last day of school.

Travis: The biggest pens you've ever seen. Ultimate pens.

Teresa: No.

Travis: No.

Teresa: No pens.

Travis: You brought 'em up, not me.

Teresa: [chuckles] All right.

Travis: Listen, man!

Teresa: So, summer is on the way!

Travis: I just finished Champion's Grove, I'm burnt out. I'm going to be bringing some C-grade jokes to this one!

Teresa: Hey...

Travis: Doin' my best! Doin' my best . Doin' my best.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: [panting] Pump it up. Got this. Okay.

Teresa: All right.

Travis: I'm a champion, I got this.

Teresa: So, in the spirit of summer—

Travis: Road trip!

Teresa: That's right, we're going to talk about road trip! Specifically Route 66.

Travis: Where one might, could you say, get their kicks?

Teresa: Indeed.

Travis: Okay!

Teresa: A lot of people around, you know, our age, remember when Cars came out, the Disney Pixar movie.

Travis: Yup. For half a second, I was like, wait, how old do you think I am?

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: That I'm like, I remember when cars were invented.

Teresa: No, the movie.

Travis: Yes!

Teresa: And that movie centers around a town.

Travis: Radiator Springs.

Teresa: That is on Route 66. And, like a lot of towns that used to be very prosperous around Route 66, find themselves slowly dying, because the road no longer goes straight through the town, there's the highway that bypasses the town.

Travis: This is true. When we moved from Cincinnati to LA, I think we were on Route 66 for a short period. There was also—

Teresa: Because we drove through Flagstaff.

Travis: There was also a point when Max Fun did a live from the Grand Canyon recording thing.

Teresa: Yes! I remember that!

Travis: And like we went and ate lunch at a place on Route 66. And now, at least for the part we were on, there's like—we were on it for a section of it, but a lot of the drive through there was like, you could see Route 66, like an abandoned, a little bit grown-over road, running next to the highway they had built next to it.

Teresa: Right, yeah. So, we will be discussing more Route 66 as the anniversary approaches, but we are going to go today through a book of Molly's Route 66 Adventure from the American Girl Collection.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Now, Molly, her novels go through World War II. And so, right after World War II, we get the baby boom. We get the idea that, you know, Americans should see America again. We're done with wartime rationing, let's go and explore, and all that kind of great stuff.

Travis: I would be interested to find out, because I'm trying to wrack my brain of like, toys, you know, kind of like these kinds of things that have a novel tie-in, right? And it—like, the only things that clicked for me at first, as far as like book and this thing, is like Five Nights at Freddy's. It's like Five Nights at Freddy's and the novels that went with it that told more of the story.

Teresa: Oh, you mean today?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Well, Unicorn Academy started as books. That's one of the things that our girls are into.

Travis: Did American Girl start as books?

Teresa: Well, I mean, they were always companion. It was always the doll and the books.

Travis: Well, this is what I'm saying, is these—anyways, I don't know. It doesn't seem that common to me. There was GI Joe and the cartoon, right?

Teresa: Mm-hm.

Travis: That you see a lot. It's just, it seems more rare to me to be like, here's a doll and a book, here's a video game and a book, here's a GI Joe and a book. I want to read that.

Teresa: The GI Joe book?

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: Interesting.

Travis: It would be a lot of, "He grunted."

Teresa: [chuckles] Well, I mean, a lot of the comics, the comic cartoons from our childhood, like X-Men and He-Man and Spider-Man, those all have comic books.

Travis: Yeah, that's true—

Teresa: But they weren't together.

Travis: But comic books are fun, because they're not just books for nerds, you know what I mean?

Teresa: Oh, okay, so the novels, the—I guess they're not quite novels.

Travis: Well, they're just words on paper, you see.

Teresa: Novellas!

Travis: But like a comic book is like cool, it's like a movie you can read.

Teresa: Mm-hm.

Travis: You know what I mean? Because there's so many pictures. Are there pictures in this?

Teresa: There are pictures in this.

Travis: Okay, then I guess it's okay.

Teresa: Okay, so the conceit of this book is that it's a scrapbook that Molly is making on her journey across Route 66 from specifically Chicago to California.

Travis: Oh, okay. Oh, look, it's got a map!

Teresa: It does. It has a little fold-out map with, "Main Street of America, Route 66, starting in Chicago." It doesn't actually start in Chicago, but that's where Molly starts.

Travis: Where does it start?

Teresa: Well, now you've called me out.

Travis: Well, we'll talk about it next week!

Teresa: We'll talk about it next week! I feel like it starts closer to the East Coast.

Travis: I think so too. It actually starts in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean.

Teresa: Ah.

Travis: It started in Atlantis, at first.

Teresa: So, they are going through Chicago to Oklahoma City and Tulsa—

Travis: I've been there.

Teresa: They'll go to Albuquerque, New Mexico—

Travis: I've been there!

Teresa: They'll go to Flagstaff, Arizona—

Travis: I've been there! Am I Molly?!

Teresa: No?

Travis: Where else? Los Angeles?

Teresa: They'll go to Boulder Dam and then Santa Monica.

Travis: Ah, man. Boulder Dam, I gotta go to Boulder Dam right now.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: That's the only one I haven't been to.

Teresa: And so, during their trip, Molly is very excited because there is a kind of like... not contest, but there's almost a scavenger hunt kind of set up.

Travis: Mm-hm, a challenge.

Teresa: A challenge, by this Royal Oil filling station. So, all the filling stations, that's a gas station, are giving away free stuff to get people to buy gas. And so, there are these clues and a decoder that she picks up. And if she decodes them correctly, she will be able to turn in these clues at a Royal Oil filling station for a signed picture of Judy Garland.

Travis: Oh, that is pretty exciting.

Teresa: It is pretty cool, right?

Travis: Be sure to drink your Ovaltine.

Teresa: Yup, just like that. They start out in Illinois, and they go through to tour Lincoln's home. And this is the thing about Route 66, we mentioned the towns, but it's almost like as they built the road basically from town to town, the towns started making it so that there were things that were fun at every stop.

Travis: When people think about like—well, I don't even know if this is in our kids' generation's heads, but like tourist trap, right? You hear about these things of like world's biggest ball of twine!

Teresa: Mm-hm.

Travis: Or stop— "We've got the most flavors of saltwater taffy in the world," right? That kind of thing. A lot of that was built around this, right? Because it was so interesting when our friends Paul and Jess from the UK were here last year. And as we were driving to Champion's Grove, Paul asked me like, "What do you call this kind of thing?" And it was like, you know, where you turn off of the highway and it's like a gas station, a McDonald's, a Walmart, right? But it's not like a town, right?

Teresa: It's not a town, yeah.

Travis: And it's like, oh, you know, it's like a turn off, it's an exit, right? That kind of thing. You start a place where somebody like builds a gas station along the route of a highway where they're like, "I think this is where people would stop to refill," right? So then people stop there to refill gas and it's like, "Oh, maybe we'll open a restaurant right next to it," right?

Teresa: Mm-hm.

Travis: And then it's like, "Okay, great, and now, you know, we need a place for the people who work at this place to live." And it just kind of expands out. And I think that Route 66, a lot of it was like, here is a town, a little town, and they build a gas station and do this thing. And then to get people to like stop and visit along the way—

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Where the road trip is as much of the trip as just getting there.

Teresa: Right. It's not about the destination.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: It is the journey, and that's what the idea of Route 66 is.

Travis: Yeah, the big fiberglass dinosaurs.

Teresa: Oh, yeah!

Travis: I think in California, right? Like that kind of like—

Teresa: I remember those.

Travis: Tourist trappy thing.

Teresa: Mm-hm.

Travis: To be like, don't you want to stop and look at these dinosaurs?

Teresa: So, Molly, they start off at the tomb of Abe Lincoln—

Travis: He died?!

Teresa: Yeah, a long time ago.

Travis: Ah, man!

Teresa: And his home, and—

Travis: Bill and Ted are going to get so sad when they find out.

Teresa: I know. And then they go to the Illinois State Fair! Like state fairs would crop up and like county fairs, and—

Travis: Corn mazes.

Teresa: Corn mazes. Wow... I hate corn mazes.

Travis: Why?

Teresa: Because of corn sweat. It's so hot and gross.

Travis: What's your problem with David Corenswet?

Teresa: *Hah.* Nothing, he's hot.

Travis: I thought you were going to say asthma. I thought it would be asthma.

Teresa: Oh. I've only ever done one corn maze and I said never again, so I don't—

Travis: Never again.

Teresa: Really know if it triggers my asthma or not.

Travis: I don't like 'em because I get scared.

Teresa: Oh, yeah.

Travis: Because I'm worried about corn minotaurs.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: They're at the center of every corn maze.

Teresa: That's a really deep cut right there.

Travis: I don't think it is? Am I the only one who thinks of minotaurs when I think of mazes? I can't be the only one.

Teresa: I don't know. [chuckles] Next, they come up to Missouri, they go to the Meramec Caverns. We have the Mammoth Caverns—

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Here in Ohio, Kentucky. But there's a lot of caverns all across the United States. And it's really fun to think about—

Travis: It's different from a cave, because it's like a big, wide-open mouth, right? A cavern is different from a cave. Am I right or am I making that up? Where a cave is like a tunnel through the thing, you know, deep—

Teresa: I think—

Travis: And a cavern is like big, wide-open space—

Teresa: I think that you are right, that a cave, like a tunnel system, might lead to a cavern, right? I think it does have to do with how large it is.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: But the thing that I think about is when people discovered it. Like, somebody just saw like a crack in the side of like a hill and they were like, "I'm going to go in there and see what's what."

Travis: I'll tell you, as someone who, like honestly, I probably wouldn't do a corn maze, it's not about claustrophobic. I don't get claustrophobic. But the feeling of like I can't turn around—

Teresa: Mm-hm.

Travis: Like that to me is like, nope, no, thank you. I don't care for this one bit. Of like the panic of like, if I needed to back out of this, I simply could not.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: No, thank you.

Teresa: You went actual spelunking.

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I had to just keep moving forward the whole time and not think about it. And then we got to the end and it was like—so, it was a cave that there was like an exploration company in West Virginia, and it was like a friend of ours' parents ran it. So he was like, "I've taken people through this cave before." So we knew what we were doing. It was not just random,

"Let's go in here and find out." I was not aware at least that when we got to the end, it was a dead end, and then we had to go back out the other way.

Teresa: Oh, wow.

Travis: And I was like—I spent the whole time thinking like, "Well, at least that part's over with."

Teresa: [chuckles] I've been through the walking tour of Mammoth Cave. I have not been spelunking.

Travis: It sucks! There was a part where it was only big enough that we had to like crawl on our bellies and like pull forward. And Justin and I were there, and I don't know if you know this about our heads, quite large.

Teresa: Quite large.

Travis: Had to fully turn my head to the side, like ear to the ground to fit through. It was so tight. And it went on for like 15 feet, and I hated it so *much*. And then I had to go back through. And look, do you—are you hearing what a brave soldier I was?

Teresa: I am, great—

Travis: I did it!

Teresa: Great job. Molly goes through the Meramec Caverns, which is purported to be Jesse James's hideout on Highway 66—

Travis: And he's still there.

Teresa: I don't know. I don't know if that's true. But in the caverns, it is so large that they have had weddings in what they call the Grand Ballroom.

Travis: Okay, so definitely not just like a cave.

Teresa: Right, no.

Travis: Oh, I've seen pi—I think I've seen pictures of the Grand Ballroom. There's like a lot of like columns and stuff, right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So, on to Missouri.

Travis: But first! A quick pit stop.

Teresa: Oh?

Travis: Let's get some gas, at a word from another Max Fun show. Does that make any sense?

Teresa: That makes sense. We're gassing it up.

[theme music plays]

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[break]

Ella: Hey, Alexis.

Alexis: Hey, Ella!

Ella: What animal has the most teeth?

Alexis: I would guess a shark.

Ella: A snail.

Alexis: No, snails don't have teeth?

Ella: They have thousands! And they are freaky looking.

Alexis: No, I don't want that to be true, okay?

Ella: [chuckles]

Alexis: Did you know that the hippocampus in your brain is named after the half horse, half fish sea creature found in Greek mythology?

Ella: I didn't know that, but we're meant to be doing animal trivia, and hippocampus isn't a real animal.

Alexis: Well, that doesn't matter on Comfort Creatures.

Ella: You're right, it doesn't matter at all. [chuckles]

Alexis: Comfort Creatures is a cozy show for lovers of animals of all shapes and sizes, real and unreal.

Ella: If that sounds like your cup of tea, then join us every Thursday for new episodes on maximumfun.org!

[break]

Travis: Okay, we're back on the road. Let's make up for lost time. I hope everyone went to the bathroom that needed to go to the bathroom, because we're not stopping again for 32 hours.

Teresa: Well, so, they make their way to Missouri and—

Travis: The 'Show-Me State.'

Teresa: Oh, really?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Oh, okay. I think that it's very interesting that in this book they talk about camping. I think that they are not exactly like pitching their own tent camping.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: But they come to a campsite at Little Piney Creek. And a lot of these campsites were kind of like the earliest of motels. So, you would have like a tent that was already there, right? And there'd be a little side flap that you could like lift up and park your car under. And there'd be like community bathrooms, latrines, or whatever—

Travis: So like in Cars, where it's the traffic cones?

Teresa: Yeah! A little bit like that, yeah.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Probably not as permanent as the traffic cones, but yeah! That was like the earliest kind of motels. And Route 66 was very famous for a lot of these. And the birth of the motel in the United States is thanks to Route 66. And the Hilton family—

Travis: And it's a—because it's a motor hotel, right? You have the hotel, which is a big, tall building, all the rooms inside. Motor hotel, motel, that you would park right outside your door, right? And be able to walk in and be right there at your car, right?

Teresa: Right. But even the motels that we know are the next generation, probably the third generation of motels. Because it did kind of start with

tents for your family and your car, right? And then it would go into little cabins—

Travis: The car is the dog of driving.

Teresa: [chuckles] Then you—it evolved into like little cabins that you parked next to. And then you had the idea of like all of the rooms with the parking out front. It's very cool.

Travis: Which starts to fall apart a little bit when you have a second floor on the motel.

Teresa: Yeah, I agree.

Travis: Where it's like, "So, wait, so I still have to go upstairs? Wait a minute, what's the point of this?"

Teresa: t this place in Missouri, Molly's little brother, Ricky, buys a rubber snake, which comes up later.

Travis: Sounds about right.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: This was a thing—I was with the Champions Grove folks, and it was a wonderful mix of like, I think the youngest host running games was 26. And then there was like me at like 42. And so we were talking about like different like road trip things at one point. And I mentioned there used to be a thing—because I was talking about our kids, and we were explaining to them like we didn't have iPads on road trips.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And they're like, "How did you watch videos?" And we were like, "We didn't."

Teresa: We didn't. [chuckles]

Travis: Right? And like, I remember getting like a portable DVD player that like plugged into the like cigarette lighter—

Teresa: Or if your family—

Travis: And I was like, this is it.

Teresa: Was rich, and they had like a conversion van that had a TV in it.

Travis: The dream. And then I mentioned a time where like at Cracker Barrel, they had an audio tape rental library where you would like get the tapes, listen to it, and then stop at another Cracker Barrel later to return it.

Teresa: That's so fun.

Travis: And like it was like me and everyone over like 32 was like, "Yes!"

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: And the ones below were like, "What are you talking about?"

Teresa: Next stop is Kansas, where I think poetically for this book, "They almost get hit by a tornado."

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Yeah, I—

Travis: I don't think you'd just be on the highway like, "Whoa! Hey, careful with your driving there, Pagos Bill."

Teresa: It says that, "The sky turned an icky green, the air got really still. Then it started to rain—"

Travis: Icky green?

Teresa: That's what it says.

Travis: That can't be right.

Teresa: "And blow so hard that Dad had to pull over. We never did see the tornado, but I'm sure it was really close, just like in the wizard of Oz."

Travis: That also though sounds like something Bebe would say when it was kind of windy, and she'd been thinking about tornadoes when she knew there were tornadoes in that area. And then like as the story would evolve later, she'd be like, "Yeah, we almost got hit by a tornado." And like, we di—it—we didn't.

Teresa: I mean, it's a—it's an American Girl book, so they do have to include some drama.

Travis: Yeah, there's a little drama in there, yeah.

Teresa: A little drama in there. Next is Oklahoma.

Travis: Oh? Klahoma.

Teresa: Oh—[chuckles]

Travis: Oh, it's where the wind comes sweeping down the planes.

Teresa: Yes, they do.

Travis: Where the wind and wheat can share a smell sweet, [sings] when the wind comes right behind the rain. Or is it waving wheat? [sings] Waving whe—it's waving wheat.

Teresa: Is it?

Travis: [sings] Where the waving wheat can sure smell sweet, when the wind comes right behind the rains. Boomer sooner! It's something like that.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: And then I assume they talk about how they get to Oklahoma and they're like, "I can basically see Los Angeles from here." 'Cause it's flat 'til the Rockies. I guess the Rockies—

Teresa: They, I mean—

Travis: Will be between.

Teresa: She does say, "Oklahoma must go on forever. We've been driving for hours."

Travis: It does feel like that. It feels like—because I went from West Virginia to Oklahoma.

Teresa: Mm-hm.

Travis: And it did kind of feel like somebody just like took a—what I'm used to the ground looking like, and kind of shook it out like a blanket to flatten it out. And it was just like, "Hey, how far do you think you could spit?" It was that kind of feeling.

Teresa: [chuckles] They stop at the Will Rogers Memorial—

Travis: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah!

Teresa: Where they see his rodeo trophies and saddles and movie costumes. He was a trick roper, a radio celebrity, a film star, an author and a newspaper writer.

Travis: That's true. All of those things.

Teresa: Yeah. And his horse named Teddy.

Travis: Yeah. Also—

Teresa: Have you been there? Have you looked at the—

Travis: I—

Teresa: I haven't.

Travis: I haven't been there, I know of it. But my men—my like college ment—or advisor, that's the word, college advisor—

Teresa: Oh, yeah.

Travis: Was an actor, was—and a teacher. And he had built a one man show about Will Rogers and love Will Rogers. And when I—we did Texarkana Waltz, which I don't know if I've talked on the show before, but I was a sheriff, and I carried a like prop shotgun. And it was the prop shotgun he had used when he was doing his Will Rogers show. So every time I would like play with it, he was like, "Hey, stop. Do you know how important that is? Let me tell you about Will Rogers."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And I was like, "Uh-huh, yeah, cool."

Teresa: Here's a lesson, don't give expensive or really sentimental things to people as props, because they will—

Travis: Especially since—

Teresa: Get broken.

Travis: Frankly, should know is gonna be a problem. There were three main cowboys in this thing. Me as the sheriff, there was cowboy Bob and I'm forgetting the young boys name, but anyway, there was a young boy. He was like 18, 19. But they got to do quick draw and like spin their guns, and I didn't have that because I had a shotgun. So I like figured out how to cock it one handed, 'cause it was a pump-action shotgun.

Teresa: Oh?

Travis: And I could like *shng*, you know. And I would do that in the show and he was directing and he was like, "No!"

Teresa: He hated that.

Travis: "No! That's not how you do it! Don't do that!"

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I'm like, but they get to do—they're like doing things and flipping the—I just got the one thing? Just like me do the one thing.

Teresa: [chuckles] Okay, Molly and the families continue through Oklahoma. They're in Tulsa, and they go and see—

Travis: That's where OSU is.

Teresa: Uh-huh.

Travis: The rival school. Well, one of several.

[both chuckle]

Travis: It's like them and Texas are the two big ones. There was a music festival there every year. It's where I saw Ben Folds, Bare Naked Ladies, Better Than Ezra, hosted by Sinbad. Which if his name had been Benbad, it would have been perfect.

Teresa: [chuckles] They see a drive-in movie, which I think is pretty cool—

Travis: In Tulsa?

Teresa: In Tulsa—

Travis: That was another thing—oh, I bet that was another big Route 66 thing.

Teresa: Definitely. Absolutely. And they go to a rodeo, which definitely also was a Route 66 thing, because there were a lot of like traveling rodeos. They

wouldn't always set up in the same space, they could go to different towns and do the rodeo business.

Travis: I'd be willing to bet that like, as much as Old West movies, Western movies informed like the modern-day perception of cowboys that is absolutely not true, I bet the Route 66 like tourist stops had a big part of that too, right? Because you wanted to kind of cash in on people's interest in the West, especially during a time where it was like all road tripping.

And you're like, "Hey, you know, people from Massachusetts or whatever, wanna hear about Cowboys?" And they—everybody had tall tales and like local legends and, like you said about like, "This was Jesse James's hideout," right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Tying everything back into the Old West, and why "it was an important part of Old West legend."

Teresa: They make it to Texas. And the thing that she says about the route along Texas is that they put fun little like signs and things along the road. This one is for Burma-Shave, they sell shaving cream. And so—

Travis: That's true.

Teresa: They put rhyming signs all along the road. So the first person to see the sign gets to read the signs of that rhyme out loud. So the signs would be placed every, you know, I guess, 150, 200 feet. And the one that Molly finds says "past schoolhouses." Next sign, "take it slow." Next sign, "let the little." Next sign, "shavers grow."

Travis: Ah.

Teresa: "Burma-Shave."

Travis: That's fun, but also kind of horrifyingly capitalistic, isn't it? That Burma-Shave as a corporation would look at children like, "Someday they'll shave."

[both chuckle]

Travis: "They'll buy our products, these little shavers. These little consumers. Protect the consumer! The more kids that die in traffic accidents—"

Teresa: Okay all right—

Travis: "The less money we'll make!"

Teresa: It's about the idea along Route 66, that these signs and the, like the big roadside signs, were very important to the livelihood of the towns around it, right—

Travis: It is also important to note, like it kind of indirectly—

Teresa: Billboards, that's the word I was looking for.

Travis: Indirectly highlights a *big* difference between Route 66 and modern day highways. Route 66 went right through the town.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Right? Right down like, so as you went through it, when they're talking about go slow for children, you know, going to school or whatever, that was because like you would stop, you know, at like red lights and stop signs and stuff. And then as they built highways, they wanted to take the traffic away from cities, right?

So redirected it, so now there are like exits to get to those places. But led to a lot more like big cities in between, right? Or like growing cities or whatever. But not really that like, "Oh, let's stop here." Right? It was like, either you're going to stop at a city where there's a lot of options, right? Or you stop for gas because you're running out of it or whatever, right? It wasn't like touring the area—

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: The same way it was before.

Teresa: In Texas, they find some wildlife. They find a desert tortoise, which has a pretty cool picture. They also stop at a café called the Roadrunner Restaurant and Soda Grill.

Travis: I like that.

Teresa: I like it too. I would—

Travis: I bet they had a good soda fountain.

Teresa: It seems that they have the choice of malted milk, milkshake, or double ice cream soda.

Travis: Yes, please!

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: All three!

Teresa: They have a special sundae that includes vanilla and chocolate ice cream topped with marshmallow, chopped pecans, whipped cream, and a cherry, for 35 cents.

Travis: What a deal!

Teresa: What a deal.

Travis: In this economy?

Teresa: Molly's family orders chicken salad on a roll, a Swiss cheese sandwich, three peanut butter sandwiches, for the children, I suppose, two iced teas, three Jell-O cups, and three double ice cream sodas. Guess how much the entire meal costs.

Travis: I'm going to say under \$10.

Teresa: Way under \$10.

Travis: \$6?

Teresa: Under \$5. \$3.

Travis: The what now?

Teresa: I know, right?

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: I know. In the book here, there's like a little pull-out menu. And man, like the most expensive sandwich in this menu is the deviled ham, which is 45 cents.

Travis: Well, that's because it's full of sin.

Teresa: What?

Travis: Devil.

Teresa: Oh—oh! Got it. Got it.

Travis: No, it's fine.

Teresa: They do have hot sandwiches that are a little more expensive. The roast turkey sandwich with mashed potatoes is 80 cents. That would be a lot—

Travis: Too rich for my blood!

Teresa: For a family of four. And the junior club, which is a single-decker, is 60 cents.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Ah, man... Makes me nostalgic for a time I never lived through.
[chuckles]

Travis: Well, but to be fair, I bet at that point, the parents were sitting there going like, "35 cents for a peanut butter jelly sandwich? Oh my gosh."

Teresa: *Wa.* Next is New Mexico—

Travis: "We could have this at home for 12 cents!"

Teresa: You probably could at that point. Next is New Mexico. They go to the greatest desert swimming hole called the Blue Hole. It is very blue and deep, apparently—

Travis: It's very blue and very hole.

Teresa: Yes. [chuckles] Much hole.

Travis: Much hole, much blue.

Teresa: The highlight of their trip through New Mexico is, of course, a Spanish-speaking town. And they're having a town fiesta.

Travis: Well, awesome.

Teresa: Yeah—

Travis: A celebrated part of American culture. Because everybody should be welcome here. And it's all part of it.

Teresa: Continuing through New Mexico, they visit a pueblo—

Travis: Even newer Mexico!

Teresa: [chuckles] Even newer Mexico. The Acoma Pueblo. And they go and see Sky City, which is where the buildings are carved out of rock on top of the mesa.

Travis: Oh, yeah! I love that.

Teresa: Very cool. I think that another thing about Route 66 is this idea that the natural beauty and the natural wonder of the United States is part of the draw, right? So this town that, I mean, had been built by people into the rock of the mesa is part of like the lore of it. And, of course, they're going to go next to the Grand Canyon.

Travis: Yeah! Which, can I tell you, one other thing, I've been to the Grand Canyon—well, I've only been once. Because we were going to go, and then what we found out was... it's a drive!

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Like because we were in Flagstaff.

Teresa: Mm-hm.

Travis: And we were like, "And as far as I'm aware, we're pretty close to the Grand Canyon." And they were like, "Yeah, like just an hour and 15 minutes that way." Or something like that. And we were like, "Ah! Okay."

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Like when we went for the Max Fun thing, it blew me away when we left the hotel we were staying at, how far we had to drive to get there. And even wilder is like the Flagstaff airport was like a single runway... At the time, I don't know if it's different now, but security, the only bathroom—

Teresa: This was like 10 years ago?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: The only bathrooms were on the other side of secu—so like, you would go through security and you're like sitting in this basically like little room with like, you know, like maybe four rows of seats. And if you had to

go to the bathroom, you had to go leave that, and then come back through security.

Teresa: Wow.

Travis: To go back in. Yeah, it was—

Teresa: That's a tiny airport.

Travis: Not a very big airport! And I was like, you would think people would be coming here a lot? Then I guess the clientele of the Grand Canyon are probably way more into like the sightseeing of it all, and the driving of it all.

Teresa: Exactly, right. So then in Arizona, they visit the painted desert and the Petrified Forest.

Travis: Don't take from there.

Teresa: Don't.

Travis: It takes a long time for wood to be petrified, like 20 or 30 years.

Teresa: So, she—

Travis: It's way longer than that. That was a joke—

Teresa: Way longer.

Travis: Teresa didn't react at all, and I get it.

Teresa: She writes, "Dad said 150 million years ago, the logs were buried in the sand. Water seeped into them and filled them with minerals. That's why they're rock-hard and filled with beautiful crystals."

Travis: Amazing.

Teresa: That's pretty cool. I want to see one of those.

Travis: But and then leave it there.

Teresa: I hadn't been saying this, but she's been picking up clues the whole time. She gets the—

Travis: I assumed.

Teresa: Yes. She gets the fifth clue at the meteor crater in Arizona.

Travis: Oh, yeah, we've heard about this, because Dotty tells us about it.

Teresa: Dotty tells us the story. She is very into astronomy, friends. She loves it. So then she gets one of the last clues, they are almost to California. They go to the Grand Canyon like we talked about, in Arizona, and—

Travis: They jump it.

Teresa: No, they don't—

Travis: They hit that big ramp that's right next to it, that they leave there year-round for people to give a shot at, if they want to. It's not required, you could drive around, but wouldn't it be a lot cooler if you jumped it?

Teresa: There's actually a picture in the book of someone jumping across the Grand Canyon.

Travis: But not like for real.

Teresa: No.

Travis: It's pretty big.

Teresa: No, I mean, it shows that there's a small section that a person is jumping across, but I'm not certain if it is a colorized photograph or if it's a—like a drawing.

Travis: I think it's a—it looks like a drawing to me.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: My memory, and like I said, I only went there once, but I remember the Grand Canyon being pretty big.

Teresa: They go to Boulder Dam—

Travis: Maybe right at—

Teresa: In Nevada.

Travis: The very end.

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: Because it doesn't go all the way across the country.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: So maybe if you can get to the—

Teresa: Maybe at the very end.

Travis: Very end, it's narrow and then widens out a bunch.

Teresa: They stop at the Boulder Dam in Nevada, and that is where—

Travis: To keep all the boulders back.

Teresa: Yeah... to keep all the boulders back. That's what dams do.

Travis: I'm so tired. Teresa, I'm so tired.

Teresa: [laughs] But at Boulder Dam, and they have a postcard in here, where the cars are driving along the dam. Which I think would be harrowing. I wouldn't want to do that—

Travis: Yeah! That's not something they still do, right?

Teresa: I don't know

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: I don't know, but they did when Molly went, after World War II in the—in the late '40s.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And—

Travis: I wouldn't.

Teresa: Finally, they end up in California. They go straight to Santa Monica pier, which is a place that we have been a couple times, and she does collect her, I think, is it an 8x10? It doesn't say. But her headshot of Judy Garland, signed. I wouldn't say that Judy Garland like provided them to Royal Oil. Probably like they are lithographs of a single print.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Right? Probably. As she's putting all of the clues together, she finds that the secret message says, "There is no place like home."

Travis: I get it!

Teresa: Which is good for Judy Garland and the—

Travis: And the almost getting hit by a tornado.

Teresa: The Wizard of Oz. But also, there's no place like home because they took a giant road trip, and—

Travis: Yeah, then they had to drive back, though.

Teresa: They're away from home and—I mean, yeah, then they do have to drive back. That's not part of the scrapbook, though. [chuckles]

Travis: Yeah, that's what—I think that they should have built a Route 67, which was a different way back, with different things you could drive through.

Teresa: Whoa?

Travis: "And now, continue on to Route 67," right? And just keep snaking your way down. Route 68, back the other way, 69, 70, like a snake. Until eventually, you're in antarctica.

Teresa: Perfect.

Travis: Is that at the bottom?

Teresa: No.

Travis: Ah, man.

Teresa: Not in the United States. [chuckles]

Travis: Not in the United States! I meant of the planet.

Teresa: Okay, but you couldn't drive across it, because there's the Panama Canal.

Travis: Well, not with that attitude? They were driving on the Boulder Dam, you don't think we could build a bridge on the Panama Canal. A man, a cla... a bridge—eh, what?

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: Don't worry about it.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: Hey, everybody, thank you so much for listening. We're gonna do more on Route 66 next week, but this was all about Molly's journey on Route 66, a very real story, I think.

Teresa: Very real.

Travis: Thank you to our researcher—

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: Alexx, without whom we couldn't have done this episode. Thank you to our editors, Gino and Rachel, without whom we could not do this episode. Thank you to you for listening. We could do the episode without you, but it would be like a car without gas.

Teresa: Aw.

Travis: Yeah. 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. And as always, we are taking topic submissions, questions, idioms, all of that! Send it to shmannerscast@gmail.com, and say hi to Alexx, because she reads every single one.

Travis: And that's going to do it for us, so join us again next week.

Teresa: No RSVP required!

Travis: You've been listening to Shmanners?

Teresa: *Manners, Shmanners.* Get it.

[theme music plays]

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