Final Cut

**Mark:** [00:00:00] Welcome to the Endless Knot Podcast

**Aven:** where the more we know

**Mark:** the more we want to find out.

**Aven:** Tracing serendipitous connections through our lives

**Mark:** and across disciplines.

**Aven:** Hi, I'm Aven

**Mark:** and I'm Mark.

**Aven:** And today we're celebrating 100 episodes!

**Mark:** Woohoo!

**Aven:** Now we're going to have a bunch of fun tidbits for you from many of our podcasting friends, but first of course, we have to have a cocktail to celebrate. So I have poured us a couple of Kir Royales. Cheers.

**Mark:** That wasn't exactly the "ding!"

**Aven:** no, it wasn't a ding. It was a clunk.

**Mark:** We'll add the 'ding' in post.

**Aven:** So a Kir Royale of course, is a drink made with champagne or some other bubbly wine and creme de cassis.

**Mark:** Somehow I was expecting it to be with chambord.

**Aven:** Well, the "fascinating past of the most [00:01:00] ladylike cocktail of all time and how to make one". This is a Town and Country article. So I don't know if it's true or not, but it says the Kir is named after its jovial French creator, Lejay connoisseur Canon Felix Kir, who was also the mayor of Dijon, who invented the first cassis cocktail, the Kir, made with white wine and the Kir Royale made with champagne.

It was made with a local wine of Dijon, white burgundy, and Lejay cassis. So his cassis. We do not have that cassis, we have a different creme de cassis. This is apparently eponymous.

**Mark:** This somehow suggests that I have to feel like my masculinity was impugned, that the most feminine of, what was it?

**Aven:** Ladylike, please. That's all right.

Because my femininity is also impugned because I've never been accused of being ladylike, so I think we're good. Anyway, I always think of it as a nice celebratory cocktail. So, cheers.

it's nice though, eh? It's a very tasty cocktail. We can't take too long on that though, because we have much to get to.

**Mark:** Oh my goodness.

**Aven:** So before we [00:02:00] get going on the sort of main content we thought we'd give you a little state of the podcast address. Because it is a milestone, a hundred episodes.

And we've been doing this a long time.

**Mark:** So 100 episodes, the first one was released on July 5th, 2015. And it was only 22 minutes long. If you can believe that. Was our last one, the longest ever?

**Aven:** Probably, over two hours I think?

**Mark:** It was long. And back then when we were recording 22 minute long episodes, we actually managed to get two a month.

**Aven:** We were doing two a month, and two videos a month.

**Mark:** By our reckoning, which is entirely artificial and in our heads we're in our seventh season now.

**Aven:** We don't label seasons but it helps us kind of keep track.

**Mark:** And the videos that we've been making, of which the audio of the video,

**Aven:** which make their way into the podcasts quite [00:03:00] often.

**Mark:** We need to run a poll or something, for what we're gonna call that, someone needs to invent, we need a coinage, a new coinage. So there's, there's your mission, everyone. We started those in September, 2014. And over that time, there have been many changes in our lives. In our podcast, and our lives.

The biggest change has happened in this past year and believe it or not, it's not COVID, though obviously that too.

**Aven:** Yeah. So the big thing that has happened in the, over the last year, Is that financial problems at the university that the university we taught at is affiliated with--it's so hard to explain to people--there's a big university, the university we were at was called Thorneloe and it was part of the big university, but technically separate. Anyway, the big university, called Laurentian, had financial problems, and that has-- we don't need to get into it all, this is a [00:04:00] celebratory episode. I do not want to get into rehashing all of the financial problems.

The point is, it caused the closure of over 50 programs and it caused the termination of well over a hundred full-time faculty and many, we never really heard an exact number of staff and sessional contract faculty. As a direct result of all of these things, the Ancient Studies department at Thorneloe closed, as well as all of Thorneloe University's academic programs, and my job, I had been an associate professor at Thorneloe with tenure, was terminated at the end of June.

And Mark's teaching at Thorneloe also ended. He's still teaching one course a term at Laurentian's English program, which is almost the only humanities program that still survives at Laurentian. So you're doing the Lord's work there, but it's a, tough spot to be in.

So, obviously this has been a rather large shock and disruption to our life and all of the time leading up to it over the [00:05:00] past year has also been, was pretty hard before June. Now, if as is quite likely, I do not find another academic permanent position, it will also mean a pretty major career change for me. I've never done anything but academia except for summer jobs. So it looks like I'm going to be looking for a new career.

Now in the very short term right now, I'm teaching a couple of courses as distance courses for a university in the Maritimes, but that will end in December and next term, I'm not going to be doing any teaching and I'm hoping to spend next term, that is the winter, doing some work on the podcast and video channels and getting to some projects I've never had time for. We keep sort of coming up with ideas and plans for "wouldn't it be good if", and then not doing them. So I'm hoping to tick a few of those things off, and maybe do some revamping of some things.

In the end, this show may end up being my one main connection to the academic world and the way for me to stay in touch with my field. So it's going to continue to be very important to me, regardless of what happens really.

**Mark:** [00:06:00] It should be pointed out that the very existence of this podcast, as well as YouTube channel before it exist because of the fact that I too was basically separated from my vocation. So, did not get a permanent academic position neither in the open market, nor as a spouse of a tenure track faculty here. And so I had been making do with the limited amount of sessional teaching that I was able to get here.

And I felt I was underutilized and unable to build towards any kind of meaningful career. And so I started off first the YouTube channel and then subsequently the podcast as a way of filling that void in my life and being able to share my [00:07:00] expertise and years of training, expensive education with a wider audience. And so, that has been the launching point of this.

**Aven:** Of the videos in particular, and then we sort of went with the podcast as well as a joint project. Yeah.

**Mark:** And now it is a pivot point, I guess.

**Aven:** Yeah, so, you know, I'm very grateful that it was already established for me. And of course, I was part of establishing it. It was a joint project all the way through. But yes it is, I guess, in some ways coming full circle to its origins.

So, the thing is that what this does mean also is a bunch of uncertainty in our life and frankly, fairly major change in our financial circumstances. So one of the things that I'm going to be doing this winter and in the future is going to be trying to find ways to make these projects at least self-sustaining. If not actually a source of some income. For instance, you know, if our Patreon could [00:08:00] reach the point of covering the costs of website hosting, the equipment and software. That would be amazing. Mark, you've been doing some teaching.

**Mark:** Yes. I've been teaching as I've mentioned before on this podcast through Speakeasy, which is an excellent, rather new company that arranges for online courses In all kinds of subjects and they have a really awesome range of courses available with various different instructors.

And I've been specifically doing courses focusing on the history of the English language, linguistic history and specifically the course that I've taught so far is about how to think like an etymologist. And so it's very etymology focused, but I will probably be expanding that into other topics, different courses as well.

So that will continue. And I hope to do, many more such courses through Speakeasy.

**Aven:** And maybe if we have time this winter, if I have time, we might even work [00:09:00] towards one that might be co-taught between the two of us. We've been thinking about heroic women and teaching about that. So we'll see.

So I'm just going to come out and say that if you have been thinking about supporting the show, this would be a great time to start. We can't deny that we would be very grateful. And if you already are, we love you. Thank you so much for doing so.

But other ways of supporting us are also really gratefully received and that can include recommending us to your friends, spreading the word to your family, mentioning it to your students.

That would be amazing. It's the best way for people to learn about new podcasts. You can also review us on various platforms. If we could grow our audience, that would be fantastic, it would be helpful for us and also just continue to make us feel good about being able to spread things we care about to the world.

But as a wrap up, thank you to everyone who has supported us in all of these ways and more over the years, and to every single listener.[00:10:00]

**Mark:** This community that has formed around us has really meant the world to us. So we feel very connected to you, and grateful for your support.

**Aven:** Absolutely. And that makes a great segue into the main content of this episode. Almost like I planned it. Because this episode features clips from a large number of wonderful podcast friends who are all going to tell us about a surprising connection. Their shows range from storytelling to etymology, to linguistics, to trivia, to history, to literature, to myth and more.

And we love how, if you'll forgive the use of the term, meta, it is to find ourselves connecting such varied shows in our own community.

**Mark:** Please don't sue us for using the-

**Aven:** completely ordinary English word

**Mark:** publicly available word, meta. Yeah.

**Aven:** .But it is fun to think [00:11:00] that we've asked a whole bunch of people to talk about their connections and then we've brought them together to connect them here. All of the people in these clips have been amazing supportive friends to us over the years and we encourage you to try out all of their shows if you haven't already, you'll probably recognize several voices already though. Links to all the shows are of course, in the description.

**Mark:** We loved hearing all the different takes on the idea of a surprising connection. They really exemplify what we think of as the core of this show: the way that looking for connections enriches our understanding of the world around us and of each other.

**Aven:** So let's start off with the dulcet tones and satisfyingly pun-filled prose of Dustin from the Sandman Stories Presents podcast. On his podcast, Dustin tells public domain stories to help you fall asleep or to while away the hour with a calm, soothing and enthralling narration. He's [00:12:00] also a great booster of other independent podcasters. So he's a fitting person to start off this set of clips.

**Dustin:** Hello, this is Dustin from Sandman Stories Presents, and I wanted to say a big congratulations to Mark and Aven on the big 100. I feel like over the years, I've taken an entire etymology course with you two and all of your wonderful guests. And because your show is so dear to me, I chose the word deer. Now the Old English word for dear was hart. And according to Etymonline that lasted up through about the 15th century, possibly due to the popularity of hunting deer at that time. The original meaning of deer in English meant any sort of wild animal and was not restricted to the sense of Bambi's parents. And this is where my mind was blown or membung in Korean: wilderness is just a place of wild animals, Wild-deer-ness. Amazing. [00:13:00] Now we can thank semantic narrowing for how it got whittled down to meaning just that furry, woodland creature that we all know and love. And also in keeping with the spirit of this podcast, I found a recipe from DiffordsGuide.com: The Stag. It is a shot and a half of cognac, a shot of Jäger, a third of a shot of lavender sugar syrup, and five drops of ginger bitters. I'll have to try it and get back to you. Anyway, congrats on the triple digits. Thank you from the bottom of my deer, er, heart and good night.

**Mark:** Thanks, Dustin. You really endeared yourself to us with that one.

Next up, we have some Roman history from the fabulous Dr. G and Dr. Rad whose podcast, The Partial Historians, is taking a detailed, but often hilarious trip through Roman history, starting from the very earliest days and [00:14:00] diving deep into the textual sources for each period.

They also have occasional guests on to talk about other Roman topics. For us, they've dug into some of the lesser known history around a very famous Roman marriage.

**Dr. Radford:** Hello. We are the Partial Historians.

**Dr. Greenfield:** I am Dr. G

**Dr. Radford:** and I am Dr. Rad.

**Dr. Greenfield:** And we're going to talk to you about a surprising connection between Augustus, the first Emperor of Rome and Livia his wife.

**Dr. Radford:** None of you could see just then, but Dr. G was using flesh rabbits when she was describing Augustus as the first Emperor of Rome. His title was very complicated, but that's not what we're here to talk about. now

**Dr. Greenfield:** No we're here to talk about the way in which this relationship and how it gets together is unexpected on so many levels. Now Livia comes from a very, uh, patrician family, so a very elite Roman family. [00:15:00] And when Julius Caesar is assassinated, her father sides with the assassins.

**Dr. Radford:** Ooh, he's with Brutus and Cassius is he?

**Dr. Greenfield:** He is. Things don't go well for Brutus and Cassius though, as most people are well aware and they ended up having to flee and then fighting some pitched battles that don't really work out for them. And Livia's father dies on the battlefield and he's on the losing side of history.

**Dr. Radford:** Yes. And so that was obviously one thing that would've maybe counted against Livia, but it gets even worse.

**Dr. Greenfield:** It does.

**Dr. Radford:** Because her husband ends up, I mean, who's also a Claudian I should probably say, very incestuous. He ends up siding with Antony when Antony has fallen out with Octavian, the future Augustus during the second triumvirate. And this is such a problem that Livia and her husband Tiberius Nero have to leave [00:16:00] Rome and go into exile for a couple of years.

And it's only when she eventually returns, husband in tow, a small child and another one growing in her belly that we get our unexpected and surprising connection.

**Dr. Greenfield:** Absolutely You would think that coming from a family, who's obviously staunchly Republican and who has been fighting against the Caesarian faction for years now.

Last thing that would happen between these two is sparks flying,

**Dr. Radford:** and yet, they end up at a dinner party, Livia and Octavian lock eyes across the room and the rest. is history.

**Dr. Greenfield:** Absolutely. Even though she's heavily pregnant Augustus is hooked.

**Dr. Radford:** And they get together, they dumped their respective partners.

Brutal as that may seem absolutely. And they marry each other and they stay together for the rest of their lives.

**Dr. Greenfield:** It is absolutely crazy because Augustus, in order to make this happen, seemingly divorced his heavily [00:17:00] pregnant wife on the day she gave birth, maybe the day after. And Livia gives birth after she has married Augustus and has to send the child back to live with his father.

**Dr. Radford:** There seems to be about a three-month window where all of this activity is taking place. So whatever is happening between these two, it is intense.

**Dr. Greenfield:** Absolutely. And yet when they get together, they seem to be unable to have a healthy child. And this would be a reason for Augustus to divorce her. I mean, let's face it.

He is a pretty elite man about Rome He wouldn't have had a tough time finding someone else to be his wife.

**Dr. Radford:** And yet he doesn't. So this relationship is full of surprises.

**Dr. Greenfield:** Absolutely. So even though you may have heard of Augustus and you may have heard of Livia, we weren't sure if he would have heard about the surprising backstory to their relationship.

**Aven:** And skipping from Australia to Scotland, here's Sadie from the podcast Accentricity, a show about accents and language and people. It's one of the most personal and heartwarming and [00:18:00] thoughtful linguistics podcasts we know, while always educating the listener about important aspect of socio-linguistics.

Here, Sadie talks about finding some unexpected etymology in her home town.

**Sadie:** Hi, I'm Sadie and I make the podcast Accentricity which is all about language and identity and how, the way we speak connects to who we are. The surprising connection I want to talk about isn't directly related to my work on the podcast though. I live in the east end of Glasgow in Scotland, and me and my partner had been thinking about moving house recently. While we've been looking, my partner noticed something that I think is really interesting. The area we're looking to move to is the council estate built in the 1920s called Red Tree, and we started to notice that a lot of the streets are named after rivers. There's Nith street, Eden street, Leader street. All of them, the names of small rivers from across the UK.

They're not the names of big well-known rivers so you wouldn't necessarily notice this straight [00:19:00] away. It's a theme but it's a very subtle theme. Some of them, we didn't immediately recognize, but we started looking up the names of these little streets and we realized that all of them are named after rivers.

All of these wee river streets are side streets coming off a big central main road, Cumbernauld road. Now Cumbernauld is a big town near Glasgow. So I'd always just assumed that Cumbernauld road is the road that leads to Cumbernauld. But my partner happens to be bilingual in English and Scottish Gaelic.

And just after we'd realized that all of these wee streets are named after rivers, he literally gasped as he suddenly made this connection. The name Cumbernauld comes from a Gaelic phrase which means the confluence of the rivers, the place the rivers flow into. Now how beautiful is that! Someone in the 1920s, we don't know who it was, although I'm going to look into it now, was given the job of planning this housing scheme. And they decided to build in this wee Easter egg, just for Gaelic speakers. Not a fancy area at all, it's just council housing, but they decided to build [00:20:00] in this little bilingual joke, just for people who would recognize that. Absolutely magic!

I love my city more than I knew, and I love town planners more than I knew. So that's my surprising connection. I hope that you enjoyed it!

**Mark:** We did indeed, Sadie. Just wonderful, thank you.

And sticking to Scotland for a moment, at least in part, here are Amy and Ryan from Lexitecture, a podcast all about etymology. And so as you'd imagine, very dear to our hearts, to quote Dustin. Amy lives in Scotland, but Ryan lives just down the road, in north American terms, from us, near Ottawa, and so is basically family. We've had the pleasure of meeting these two in person at a conference where we got to meet a number of the guests on this show in fact. So we can say they're just as wonderful in person as they are fascinating on their show. Take it away, Amy.

**Amy:** It's inconceivable to me--I watched the Princess Bride yesterday-- anyway, [00:21:00] inconceivable to me that the Endless Knot has only got a hundred episodes. Because I feel like, our podcast and Gandalfs, they've been at this for a lot longer than we have, and Mark and Aven in their wonderful Gandalf-y way, asked about connections.

So, once upon a time, dear listener, it's that kind of story, this. It's so much of a, so much of a story story that I feel it's, it's fine to say that. Once upon a time, I had a nervous breakdown. And that, boo, the story has taken a definite downturn. And I, I, for the first time in my life, went to see a therapist and I was in a really horrible place and, you know, let's not dwell on the horribleness of that, but I went to see a therapist and during one of our sessions, she mentioned to me a book, and the title of the book was the sort of book that I would cross the street to avoid. It's called "why you can't afford the luxury of [00:22:00] another negative thought", yeah ugh, was actually what I thought. But also I was pretty crazy and I was pretty desperate and I really wanted to not feel like that anymore.

**Ryan:** Right.

**Amy:** And so I thought, well, I'm going to see if I can find this book. So I went online to have a look, see if I could find the book. And I discovered that it was available from a large book selling website for one pence.

You know, that happens sometimes, you find a secondhand book for a penny.

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Amy:** So I, I got myself the book, it came, and I opened it. And something very odd had happened. Because when I was just a little wee thing, when I started secondary school, I had an English teacher who was wonderful. She was just, she was so full of passion and interest and she was quirky and she was fun. She had lots of [00:23:00] personality, she didn't take any shit she was just, she was great. I absolutely adored her.

And when she was first my teacher, I wasn't aware of this, but as I got a bit older and, you know, found out a bit more about stuff, she didn't have very good mental health. In fact, she would quite often be off school for long periods of time.

And then she would come back and, you know, the cycle would repeat for her. And she lived, she lived a bit of a lonely life and, you know, she had struggles and she had died. She died about a year before that point. And I went to her funeral and it was absolutely full.

Anyway, the book that had been recommended to me by the therapist had my English teacher's name hand written in the front of it.

**Ryan:** Oh man.

**Amy:** And I looked at it. She had this really beautiful florid handwriting that I could recognize at forty paces. [00:24:00] And I looked at it and thought, and it was just, it was two initials and the surname, and I thought, that's, that's her book. How can this be her book? I took a picture of the signature and I sent it to another English teacher, former English teacher of mine.

And I said to her, this is Barbara's book, isn't it? And she said, yeah, where did you get it? So I, I was curious about, where had I gotten it from, you know, I I'd literally gone into Amazon and typed in the title of this book. And this was the first hit that happened from that search. So I had to look at the seller and I discovered that the seller was one of these companies that's looking at making a million dollars by selling books for a penny and that they had a huge warehouse somewhere down in England, I forget where exactly. And the teacher, that I'd messaged, she said, of course, you know, when, when she died, she didn't have any family in this part of the world, so her house was [00:25:00] probably cleared by one of these firms that, that does that, you know, they, they clear houses and they sell what they can and they get rid of the rest of it. So somehow from her house in Dundee, that book had traveled to a warehouse down south and it had been catalogued and listed ready for me to find it when I looked it up on the recommendation of a therapist who I didn't like, and it landed on my doorstep with her name written in the front cover.

**Ryan:** Good grief, that you absolutely have not told me that story before. I don't know how, cause it's amazing.

**Amy:** So, so if life is stranger than fiction, then, you know, I, I feel like, I feel like there's only certain kinds of books where you could read a story like that and believe in it, but it happened.

**Ryan:** If you saw that in a movie, you'd be like, okay, come on.

**Amy:** Yeah, exactly. [00:26:00] It would be a really cheesy movie, wouldn't it?

**Ryan:** Oh, it'd be awful.

**Amy:** So here I am, living in a cheesy movie. I would love to tell you that I read the book and it changed my life and it made everything better. And that's not really how recovery from mental illness works, in case you're wondering. If there was a single book out there that could just change your life in an instant, then I feel like we would all have found it by now.

But, it reminded me that this wonderful woman who I so admired had struggled just like I was struggling and I I read the book of course. And it gave me some insights and it was interesting, but mainly what it gave me was the sense of magic that, that she inspired in me, in the first place. The magic of stories and the magic of legends and the magic of poetry and the magic of language.

So Endless Knot, this is my story about connection.

**Ryan:** That's yeah, that's amazing. Awesome. And if you're listening to this, you are listeners of the Endless Knot so you know, how [00:27:00] all that stuff fits in and how oddly kind of appropriate it is just given all the different connections and tangents and threads that bring things together in miraculous and unexpected ways. Like the fact that we even know Mark and Aven, who are amazing.

**Amy:** That's a good story in itself, isn't it?

**Ryan:** Yeah. We are, in case you're wondering who we are. We are, uh, that's Amy, I'm Ryan. We host Lexitecture, which is a podcast about words and etymology and the stories that we find or make up about them.

**Amy:** So many tangents, all the tangents, occasionally a connection.

**Ryan:** It's not about stories like the one you just heard, but it's not remotely uncommon for us to go on these tangents that involve stories like that. So if you like words and stories, you might like what we do, but congratulations to Mark and Aven for a hundred episodes of just mindblowing amazing and awesomeness that you've put out into the world.

**Amy:** And here's to a hundred thousand more.

**Aven:** Thank you, Amy. That's a pretty spinetingling story, in a good way. And sticking with people who are every bit as [00:28:00] delightful in person as they are on their show, we have Kevin up next from The History of English podcast. I'm sure most of you already know his show, but if you don't, you need to check it out.

He's been working this way through the history of the English language from Proto-Indo-European onward, and is just transitioning into early modern English after I'm not quite sure how many years. His combination of meticulous research, lucid and careful explanations, insightful connection-making and gentle humor make his show one of the absolute treasures of independent podcasting. And here, he tells us about an etymological pair that may have helped to start it all off.

**Kevin:** Hi, Mark and Aven. Congratulations on a hundred episodes. I hope both of you are enjoying a nice cocktail to celebrate the occasion. I'm sure you are. I may have one too, to celebrate along with you . At any rate, I was thinking about interesting connections in language, and as you know, that's one of the things I like to explore in my podcast.

So it's difficult to pick [00:29:00] just one. But rather than choosing something really obscure and perhaps really interesting, I came up with something a little bit plain and simple, but I chose it because it's one of the first linguistic connections that I ever came across. And it's probably the one that spurred my overall interest in etymology.

It's the connection between the words shirt and skirt. Of course, those are two very basic pieces of clothing, but at one time in the distant past, the two words described the same garment. It was more like a tunic that draped over the body, probably secured around the waist with a belt. The word shirt is the native English word for that piece of clothing, but in the late Anglo-Saxon period, the Vikings invaded England and they brought their old Norse words with them.

And they had their version of the same Germanic word for that garment, but they called it a skirt rather than a shirt. The Vikings retained at the [00:30:00] original Germanic "sk" sound at the beginning of the word, but the Anglo-Saxons had converted that "sk" sound into a "sh" sound shortly after they arrived in England in the fifth and sixth century.

So the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings shared a lot of the same Germanic vocabulary, but the Anglo-Saxon words were often pronounced with a "sh" sound where the Viking version was pronounced with a "sk" sound. Over the course of the middle ages, clothing styles evolved, and the old tunic draped over the body started to disappear.

People started to wear separate items of clothing on the upper and lower parts of the body. And the native English word shirt was retained for the garment worn on the top. And the Norse word skirt was retained for a specific garment worn on the bottom. And that gave us the distinction we have today.

But the reason I like that connection so much is that it shows how these connections are often right there in front of [00:31:00] us, staring us in the face. And with a little bit of basic knowledge, like a small sound shift in English, we can suddenly see those connections all around us, like the English word ship and the continental Germanic words, skiff and skipper.

And we can also find it in the words, shell and scale. That might be hard to see at first, but if you imagine the Vikings using old-fashioned scales to weigh something by balancing an item on each side of the scale, and then you consider that they sometimes used shells as the plate on each side to hold the items, then you can start to see the connection between shells and scales. And of course, shell is the old English word and scale is the old Norse. And again, we see that same sound difference between those two words. I've always found that simple little connection so fascinating, and it reveals so much history.

So I hope you find it as interesting as [00:32:00] I do. At any rate, congratulations again, on a hundred episodes and here's to at least 100 more.

**Mark:** Thanks, Kevin! Returning to Canada and sticking to history. Our next story is from Bry; one half of the Pontifacts podcast, a show about papal history, that takes a decidedly irreverent, but impeccably researched, approach to every Pope in history. It's a very fun show even if you thought you had no interest in the Catholic church.

In this story, Bry reminds us that unexpected connections are all around us, not just in our research.

**Bry:** Hi, I'm Bry from Pontifacts, a papal history podcast ranking all of the Popes. And here is a surprising connection between two very important people in my life. When I was a child, I had a best friend. Her name was Heather, and we were absolutely inseparable. We spent all our time together at each other's [00:33:00] houses with each other's families.

And we were the dynamic duo of all our classes through grades two, three, and four. Then she moved away and we were both heartbroken, but eventually we gradually fell out of touch. Now the summer before I started grade nine, I met a boy, Jordan. We had a very love at first sight thing happen. We lived the high school sweethearts cliche, and now he's my husband.

And we've been together for 18 years. Anyways several years into our high school relationship. We were talking about our childhood friends and I mentioned amusingly that he had the same last name as my childhood best friend. He asked for her name. And when I told him he laughed and said, oh yeah, that's my cousin.

Not only was Heather his cousin, but they have grown up [00:34:00] very close. And there was a very good chance that I actually met him on one of the various family events that I had attended with her when I was so little, though neither of us have any clear memory of that. So it could have happened, it could not. But either way, my mind was blown.

Clearly, I had a very surprising connection to this family and they were all very good people for me. So congratulations, Mark and Aven, on a hundred episodes and here's to a hundred more.

**Aven:** Thanks Bry.

**Mark:** And now a great example of a truly serendipitous connection that came up in some podcast research from Betty of Pictorial. In this podcast, Betty and co-host Quinn take turns researching interesting parts of art history and culture, and sharing those stories with each other. They do a great job of making it interesting and accessible to anyone, whatever your background. And in this clip, Betty talks about one of our [00:35:00] perennial favorite topics: colors.

**betty:** Hey guys, congrats on a hundred episodes! Pictorial is actually also celebrating the release of our 50th episode in two weeks from when I'm recording this. A few months ago, we did an episode on Pictorial about a specific blue called the International Klein blue, an intensely vivid, deep blue color inspired by the naturally occurring ultramarine blue found in the stone lapis lazuli.

We found out this color shows up a lot in pop culture, such as in music, film and books. One particular instance is the Academy Award winning actor Eddie Redmayne wrote a thesis paper on the color for his art history degree and has talked in interview about how as a color blind person, the International Klein blue is one color he could easily distinguish from others because of its intensity.

Then a couple of weeks ago, we talked about a totally different topic, musicals and plays that feature [00:36:00] visual artists. Quinn was talking about the play Red, which is about the artist Mark Rothko, who painted a series of large paintings in a deep red color. It turns out, in the original production of the play, Eddie Redmayne played Mark Rothko's fictional assistant who mixed the red paint for him. He then even won a Tony award for best actor in this role. It was a totally random connection we didn't expect. A person with a color in his name happens to be colorblind, but ends up writing papers and acting in plays all about iconic colors.

If listeners want to check out those Pictorial episodes, you can find us on any podcast app or relay.fm/pictorial. And look for episodes 43 and 50. Congrats again, guys, for a hundred episodes of the Endless Knot. Here's to the next 100 and even more beyond that!

**Mark:** Thanks Betty.

**Aven:** And now back to language, but over to Australia by way of Sweden to hear from Daniel and [00:37:00] Hedvig, two of the hosts of Because Language, the successor to Talk the Talk; a show about linguistics and language in the news and in the world. This show is one of the most consistent and longrunning linguistic shows out there. And it's got a perfect combination of personable chat and well-informed educational material with an ongoing interest in the political and social ramifications of language use. Here, Daniel and Hedvig share a couple of intriguing etymological clusters with us.

**Daniel:** Hey, Mark and Aven! Congratulations on your 100th episode. This is Daniel and Hedvig from Because Language.

**Hedvig:** Congratulations, well done.

**Daniel:** That's hard, a hundred episodes.

**Hedvig:** A hundred episodes is a lot. I don't think people realize. And I think you're doing a great job.

**Daniel:** All right. So they asked us to give some kind of connection that we've noticed, and the first thing I thought of was connections for English words. Although, you know, there's more than English, of course. What did you come up with Hedvig?

**Hedvig:** Well, I think it's really funny that the word [00:38:00] for eye in English and the word for egg in German sound the same.

**Daniel:** They do?

**Hedvig:** Yeah, they're both "eye", and I was thinking maybe this was some sort of mysterious connection. Maybe, eyeballs are round and eggs are round. Maybe there was something there and I went digging and it's unfortunately not the case. I'm sorry. Oh, so eye goes back to proto Germanic, \*auga, which goes back to a proto-indo-European root that I can't pronounce for the life of me. It has H T E K and a tiny w I don't know how to pronounce that, but the, egg one, so eye also in, in Dutch and in German and, uh, it goes back to another root. So they're not related but they sound very similar and I was, I was hoping they were related, but oh, all that looking, and they are not.

**Daniel:** Eye is interesting.

**Hedvig:** Eye is interesting as well because we get other words [00:39:00] with roots for eye in them so for example, window, which comes to English from old Norse, vindauga, which is the same \*auga as in eye, and that is so a window is the eye to the wind or the hole to the wind.

**Daniel:** That is interesting. It's the wind eye.

**Hedvig:** Yeah. Yeah. I kinda like that.

**Daniel:** I would've thought it was the wind mouth, but that's, you know, that's just me.

I don't make these decisions.

**Hedvig:** No, you, you, you don't, uh, a lot of other European languages have something more like fönster, fenetre, funsta, these ones, but yeah, English got it from, from Old Norse. I found another one as well, which is that Daisy also has an eye in it, which is quite odd.

**Daniel:** What's the connection here between a daisy and an eye?

**Hedvig:** Yeah, it's dægesege, old English, which is the day's eye, so I think it's supposed to be because the flowers close during the night and they open during the day, which to be fair, a lot of flowers [00:40:00] do.

**Daniel:** Okay but they do look especially ocular, you must admit.

**Hedvig:** They do? I don't know, but anyway, Daisy, day's eye, so I've been thinking a lot about eyes and eggs. That's what I was thinking about.

**Daniel:** The eye one that surprised me was inoculate because it's got the Oculus in there, ocular, and does that have anything to do with, with eye and it does.

**Hedvig:** Okay. Yeah, I would, I didn't know this one, but as soon as I hear "ocu', I assume it's eye? Yeah.

**Daniel:** Yeah. Well, it seems that if you were doing the kind of work where you graft in a bud into a plant, you're actually grafting in a bud, but people would sometimes say you're grafting in an eye, so the, in is in the ocular, you're putting the eye in to the plant.

**Hedvig:** Is that similar, you know, how, when potatoes get little sprouts?

**Daniel:** Those are eyes.

**Hedvig:** They're eyes, aren't they? Yeah.

**Daniel:** Yes, they are.

**Hedvig:** That's fun, I like that.

**Daniel:** [00:41:00] Well, the connection that I noticed was, we just had Halloween recently, as you listen to this recording, I was thinking of 'mare' for death, M R. Anything with M and then some vowel and then R and you kind of expect it in words, like mortal and morbid. And, even murder I was kinda surprised by murder. But I didn't expect it in mortgage that M O R T what's the deal with that?

**Hedvig:** And that's even with a T in the spelling, yeah exactly. So it's even closer to, I mean, it sounds like it's from French, mort, yeah, mourir.

**Daniel:** The gage is a wage, you know, that G to w thing that happens in like ward and guard. Well, it's here as well. It's kind of like a dead, not a wage, but a dead pledge. It's dead because it dies when you pay it off. And if you can't pay it off, then it dies because you defaulted.

**Hedvig:** That's funny.

**Daniel:** The other one that I thought was interesting, and I think this one actually came [00:42:00] up in the Endless Knot episode on magic, but I still think it's super interesting. Nightmare.

**Hedvig:** Oh, no, it's a, it's a person. It's a woman.

**Daniel:** Uh, you knew this?

**Hedvig:** Yeah. Cause it's just a Swedish word.

**Daniel:** It is? I came to the right person. So what is this?

**Hedvig:** Mara. It's like a mythological witch type woman who rides you at night. That's why you have nightmares.

**Daniel:** Wow. Okay. When you say ride, yes, that is correct, it is an incubus a night goblin. I got to say, you know, you've heard of sleep paralysis, right?

**Hedvig:** Yes. That's the state where you... it can happen when you wake up or fall asleep. So when you fall asleep, it's when your body goes into the sleep state before your consciousness does. So you feel as if you're paralyzed, but you can also have it when you wake up. So your body doesn't respond to your, neural impulses from your brain. So you can't move for a while after you wake up. And some people also report feeling a pressure on their chest and a presence in the [00:43:00] room. And that's where people believe some of the stuff about like demons and things torturing you during the night. It's like believed to be maybe because of the sleep paralysis. Is that right?

**Daniel:** Yes, it is. It's absolutely correct. I've never experienced this before, but I've talked to people who have, and it seems blah,

**Hedvig:** horrible, truly.

**Daniel:** At least you can say, okay, my brain is not doing the thing, but it will pretty soon. Or my body's not doing the thing. Ah, so those were some of the bone chilling words that I connected together in my mind because of the mor- or mare root.

**Hedvig:** Good spooky vibes.

**Daniel:** Very spoopy. Well, Mark and Aven, congratulations for making it to a hundred episodes. That's really a great landmark. And you know, when we started taking Talk the Talk really public, you know who some of the first public linguists were to notice us? It was Mark and Aven, and the Endless Knot. So they've been, they've been kind of tracking us from the beginning, so it was really great to see them [00:44:00] make this milestone.

**Hedvig:** That's amazing. Yeah. Great.

**Mark:** And now for something, a little different. Moxie from Your Brain on Facts, a fascinating and fun show about things you didn't know, things you thought you knew and things you never knew you never knew, is going to blow your mind a bit with a story about a pair of twins.

**Moxie:** Hey, it's Moxie from Your Brain on Facts, here with my enthusiastic contrafibularities to Endless Knot for their 100th episode. Now, whether my surprising connection is a connection or a synchronicity is a question I'll leave to the philosophers. But I want to tell you real quick, the story of two twin boys born in 1940. At only three weeks old, they were put up for adoption. Separate families adopted each boy and they named them both James, calling them Jim for short. They grew up never knowing anything about one another, but [00:45:00] their lives were surprisingly parallel. They had each had a pet dog named Toy and in elementary school had been good at math, talented in woodshop, but struggled with spelling.

Coincidences really started to pile up as they moved into adulthood. I mean, like if you saw this in a movie, you'd throw popcorn at the screen and walk out. Both Jims married women named Linda, divorced them, and then married women named Betty. They each had sons they named James Allen, though asterisk, they did spell Alan differently, but y'all need to get together with the spellings of Allan. There's far too many of them. Both smoked, drove a Chevy, held security-based jobs, and they even vacationed at the exact same Florida beach, though one assumes not at the same time. After being reunited at age 37, they took part in a study at the university of Minnesota, which showed that their medical history, [00:46:00] personality tests, and even brainwave tests were almost completely identical.

Normally I give facts. I mean, my show is called Your Brain on Facts, but I think the cool story of the two Jims raises a lot more questions than it could possibly answer. And that's what I love about learning. And that's what I love about podcasts like the Endless Knot. Congratulations on 100, and I look forward to being part of episode 200.

**Aven:** Thanks, Moxie. We look forward to that too. Next up, we have another word history podcast. Shauna and Dan over at Bunny Trails do deep dives into idioms, and I never fail to learn something surprising about where they come from or how they're used. In this case, perhaps in a nod to our cocktail mixing habits, they're looking into ice.

**Shauna:** Hello word nerds. I'm Shauna Harrison.

**Dan:** And I'm Dan Pugh.

**Shauna:** And we're the hosts of Bunny Trails, a word history podcast.

**Dan:** It's a whimsical adventure of idioms and [00:47:00] other terms of phrase.

**Shauna:** Every week we take an idiom or other turn of phrase and try to tell the story from its entry into the English language, to how it's used today.

**Dan:** To help our friends, Aven and Mark celebrate 100 episodes, we want to bring you a little history on the word ice and some phrases that contain it.

According to the Oxford English dictionary, ice is quote "frozen water. Water made solid by cooling to a low temperature either naturally by weather or climate or artificially as by refrigeration" end quote. Ice comes to old English from Germanic.

As an aside, I find it interesting the middle English version of icicle is spelled I S Y K L E. The I S is from the Proto-Germanic for ice while the Y K L E is from the Proto-Germanic for something like a compact mass of ice. So the word icicle today might be described as an icy ice clump. [00:48:00]

**Shauna:** For the phrase "to break the ice", according to the Cambridge dictionary, means quote, "to make people who have not met before, feel more relaxed with each other" end quote.

It joined the lexicon in the 1500s and seems to come from Erasmus who defined it in Latin "scindere glaciem" as meaning to open the way and be the first to carry out a task. Erasmus attributes, the phrase to Italian humanist Francesco Filelfo whose work was posthumously published in the late 1400s and early 1500s.

There isn't much evidence to show where Francesco would have pulled it from, though we know some places were breaking ice on small waterways to facilitate passage in the late 1300s. So it could be from a literal usage.

**Dan:** Another phrase using ice is "on thin ice", which according to the Oxford English dictionary means quote "in a precarious or risky situation" end quote.

The literal usage of ice being thin [00:49:00] has been around since at least the 1600s. But the figurative didn't seem to arise until the mid 1800s. Like this example from Ralph Waldo Emerson in his essay, "Prudence" dated 1841. Quote "iron cannot rust nor beer sour, nor timber rot, nor calicos go out of fashion nor money stocks depreciate in the few swift moments in which the Yankee suffers any one of them to remain in his possession. In skating over thin ice, our safety is in our speed" end quote.

Emerson seems to get some credit for originating the phrase on thin ice as a figurative. And we can't find any evidence that would disprove that. Regardless of its origins. Ralph Waldo Emerson definitely deserves credit for popularizing the phrase.

**Shauna:** If you want to hear more of us, you can find Bunny Trails, a word history podcast on Pandora, Audible, Ghana, Spotify, Good Pods Shuffle... pretty [00:50:00] much anywhere podcasts live. Or find us at our forever home BunnyTrailspod.com

**Dan:** Aven and Mark, congratulations on reaching the 100 episode milestone. We look forward to Bunny Trails being back on the show to help you celebrate episode 200 in a few more years. Until then remember, words belong to their users.

**Mark:** Words to live by. Okay. Now we're going to take a literary turn with Chris and Suzanne from the Spouter Inn Podcast and their discussion about the quest for connections that lies behind their wonderful show about literature, ends with a request for suggestions. So consider sending them your ideas.

**Chris:** Hello hello from The Spouter Inn, I'm Chris

**Suzanne:** And I'm Suzanne

**Chris:** and congratulations, Mark and Aven on reaching 100 episodes.

**Suzanne:** It's amazing!

**Chris:** That's so many episodes. We're about to hit 50

**Suzanne:** and we're tired.

**Chris:** We're tired. Ahhhh. So here at The Spouter Inn, we [00:51:00] talk about quote unquote, "great books". From very old texts, like The Illiad or the Mahabharata to contemporary works like Marjane Satrapi's autobiographical comic Persepolis, or C.L.R. James' terrific book about colonialism and the sport of cricket "Beyond the Boundary".

**Suzanne:** Yeah, but when we first started the podcast, we were excited about doing quote unquote, "great books", but we also had a problem. There are so many books we could choose from how would we ever choose which ones to cover? What order would we do them in? And also this whole idea of great books. Like we knew that they were books that keep giving over a long period of time, but we're not totally comfortable with the hierarchies that emerged out of that. So we got interested instead in connections. So sometimes these were very obvious connections like the lineage that links Virgil's Aeneid let's say, and Homer's Iliad, but also less obvious connections and almost what you might say, conversations that happen between and among books.

**Chris:** So we decided to organize our episodes into little clusters, three books that were connected by a single topic. For [00:52:00] example, we once did a Sports Cluster where we read that book I mentioned about cricket, but that's also where we slotted the Aeneid, which encouraged us to really focus on book five. As you may know, it's not one of the books of the Aeneid that usually gets a lot of love. It's the one where Aeneas hosts like some sporting events between his soldiers and gives out prizes and such. I mean, what's that all about? Why does Virgil spend an entire book on these games that have little to nothing to do with the overall plot of The Epic?

**Suzanne:** Yeah and it was fantastic to approach Virgil again, whom we'd both read many times, together with the insights we'd gotten from reading C.L.R James, and then also to think about C.L.R. James again, after reading Aeneid, in other words, they looked really different when they were up next to each other. And these kinds of connections are sometimes planned, but sometimes they happen in the most unexpected ways. We'll often have a theme in mind, but then get to the end of a cluster and be like, wow, this whole other theme was there all along.

**Chris:** Yeah. It's always really exciting when things emerge like that. So, Suzanne, what cluster do you think we should be doing next?

**Suzanne:** It is [00:53:00] always hard to answer that question. I know that we have a couple of clusters on deck. We've been thinking about one on time, one on dreams, but one that I got kind of excited about, thinking about recently is the idea of one on Orientalism. Yeah, which is a topic I kind of, I mean, I've been interested in it for a long time, but the reason it's been on my mind lately is because thinking about Dune, the book and the movie, and thinking about what is specifically Islamic and also Arabic inflected language is doing there and how people are talking about that. And so that made me back out into thinking about other things we might put with that to bring it out like, um, Said's Orientalism, the book itself, which came out in the seventies, there's a lot to say about its impact and even its impact potentially right now. And we've been talking for a long time about doing the Thousand and One Nights, and it'd be very fun to do that by way of Burton's very Orientalizing translation from the 19th century. So, you know, there's just so much possibility out there right now as in the past.

**Chris:** There is, that's a, that's a really interesting collection of ideas. I'm a little [00:54:00] worried about doing Dune, just because even the people I know who loved that book growing up, kind of don't usually strongly recommend it, or they're very cautious about recommending it anyways to outsiders. And I'm worried that I just won't like the book and that can be a real problem. Like we always try to be very generous with our readings and, and at least one of us has to love the book.

**Suzanne:** Yeah, well at least one of us has to have really strong feelings. Right? That's the thing, the only thing that's bad is apathy.

**Chris:** I wonder if there is a recent book of science fiction, let's say, that sort of responds to Dune written by somebody who comes from a colonized background that we could have as our foregrounded episode, and then maybe we would do a bonus episode about Dune.

**Suzanne:** That's cool

**Chris:** That could be interesting.

**Suzanne:** Yeah, and we've been talking for a long time about kind of extending into the genre of science fiction in ways we haven't done before, so that might be a great way to do it.

**Chris:** Yeah. Only problem is, I don't know what book that would be.

**Suzanne:** We have to ask listeners.

**Chris:** Aven [00:55:00] or Mark, if you know, or if any of your listeners know you can hit us up on Twitter at TheSpouter , and, uh, give us your suggestions or if there are any other books you think would be really interesting to do on a cluster about Orientalism, that would be pretty cool.

**Suzanne:** Um, so congratulations again, on a hundred episodes, we can't wait to, uh, to try to reach that milestone ourselves and we can't wait to see the next things you guys do together.

**Aven:** We'll have to think about that. I wonder if Ursula Le Guin's Earthsea books would be an interesting counterpoint to an Orientalism cluster. Still a white writer, of course. Or Michael Crichton's Eaters of the Dead, which is the movie that the 13th Warrior was based on, for a reversal of the Trope of "Voyage to the Exotic East".

**Mark:** I would definitely second that suggestion. I really like that novel. And perhaps to go along with it, what about Dracula? Again, it's a sort of reversal, a little bit of the, of the Trope

**Aven:** with [00:56:00] some occidentalism

**Mark:** Exactly.

**Aven:** Moving on. Here's a bite-sized morsel of etymology for Mignon from the Grammar Girl podcast. Unsurprising, since she specializes in quick, informative and intriguing facts about language from usage to history. Her episodes are equally useful and fascinating.

**Mignon:** Hey, Aven and Mark. This is Mignon Fogarty from the Grammar Girl podcast, and congratulations on your hundredth episode. I'm so happy for you and especially for all your listeners who get to learn so much from you.

A surprising connection I came across recently while working on a piece about words we use to describe walking was the relationship between the verbs to shove and to shuffle, as in the way you walk, when you shuffle along.

Sources say that shuffle may be a frequentative form of shove. That's a verb form that indicates repetition. So if you're shuffling, the idea is that you're making the motion of a series of little shoves. I find that [00:57:00] delightful. And again, congratulations on your hundredth episode of the Endless Knot.

**Mark:** Thanks Mignon. Next let's turn back to the ancient world. As Caroline from the Wonders of the World podcast tells us about a surprisingly ubiquitous Greek figure. Caroline's show is part history lesson, part travel guide, and part recipe book. Focusing each episode on a world wonder, she weaves wonderful stories about the people and events that stand out across history and around the world. And we thoroughly approve of her clear understanding of the importance of always sampling the best of the local cuisine.

**Caroline:** Hi, I'm Caroline Vahrenkamp, host of Wonders of the World, the podcast that visits the great places on Earth to tell a story of our people, our civilization, and our planet. And I'm delighted to congratulate the Endless Knot on its hundredth episode. When I started building a podcast on the Wonders of the World, [00:58:00] I knew I'd run into some interesting connections, like how Gustave Eiffel of Eiffel Tower fame also built the superstructure for this statue of Liberty. But I was not aware of the greatest connection in the ancient world.

Our story begins in Rhodes, home of the Colossus, that remarkable bronze sculpture that towered over Rhodes Harbor for a measly 54 years before falling over in an earthquake. The anticlimactic statue was dedicated to the sun god Helios by the Rhodians as a thank you for delivering them from conquest by the Macedonian general Demetrius Poliorcetes, the Seiger of Cities. Not conqueror of cities, the seiger of cities.

He wasn't great at his job. And all the siege equipment left over from his failed siege of Rhodes gave the Rhodians the bronze that they use to build the [00:59:00] Colossus. I figured he was just a footnote in Rhodes' history until the next episode. That's when I learned that the guy who first ran the Great Library of Alexandria had been an Athenian, but he had been run out of Athens by a petty tyrant.

And that tyrant was none other than Demetrius Poliorcetes. Soon enough I began to see him everywhere. He besieged, but again, failed to conquer the splendid desert city of Petra. He turned the Parthenon into his personal sex house. He built the Temple on Samothrace that gave us the Nike, the Winged Victory that now sits in the Louvre.

His descendants ruled the Eastern Mediterranean for centuries: Egypt, Syria, and even potentially Rome. One of his descendants was the Syrian king against whom the Jews revolted to create the holiday of Hanukkah. Another was Cleopatra. Yes. That Cleopatra.

[01:00:00] All told, Demetrius is directly or indirectly connected with 12 different wonders of my 200 world wonder list, which is a ridiculous percentage.

Demetrius is a footnote. He was a mediocre king in an era full of mediocre kings. And yet, he is a symbol of the interconnectedness of history. You can see his bust in the Prado in Madrid. If you'd like to take a gander. He's not bad looking.

Congratulations on a hundred episodes Aven and Mark, that's such a wonderful achievement.

And for you listeners, for more on Demetrius and other great connections throughout history, please check out Wonders of the World, available on whatever system you're using now... probably.

Thank y'all so much.

**Aven:** Thanks Caroline. Staying with the ancient world, Liv from Let's Talk About Myths, Baby has a mythological connection for us. Liv's podcast retells Greek myths in an [01:01:00] up-to-date and critical, but loving and very funny way.

And also she has a series of interviews with scholars and authors about myth and the Greek world. It's an engaging and informative show, perfectly balanced. Oh, and she's also written a book about myth and has a book of myth-based cocktails coming out soon called Nectar of the Gods, and you should definitely pre-order that.

**Liv:** Hi, Liv from Let's Talk about Myths, Baby here with my surprising connection. So one of the things I love from Greek mythology most is the story of how peacock feathers came to look like they do. So the story goes that Hera the queen of the gods, wife of Zeus had this beloved friend, guardian, he didn't guard her, but he was a guardian.

His name was Argus. Argus was a guardian, but there was something that made him particularly [01:02:00] good at it. And that was that he had many many eyes, a hundred eyes to be precise. And that made him particularly good at watching people. And at one point she used Argus to guard. One of Zeus's many, who knows what to call them and have it be appropriate and also true. One of the many women that Zeus was with whether or not she was actually into it, a woman named Io. Hera had Argus guard Io--Io was in the form of a cow. Long story. But Argus was guarding Io and Zeus wanted to get to Io. So he had Argus killed by the God Hermes, who is not a particularly murderous God by any stretch.

But in this case, he was used to do away with Argus. From then on Hermes became called Hermes Argeiophontes. That means he killed Argus. But that's not the point of the [01:03:00] peacocks. The point is that when Argus was killed, Hera was so distraught. She loved him. And she was so upset about his death. I mean, particularly at the hands of Hermes, on order of her own husband, man, they had a rough marriage.

Hera was so upset about the death of Argus, that she wanted to keep him with her forever. And so she put his many eyes, his hundred eyes into the feathers of the peacock so that he could stay with her forever. As the peacock became her official godly bird.

**Aven:** And now back to linguistics. Our next clip is Gretchen and Lauren from Lingthusiasm, a wonderful show about linguistics that is accessible to anyone, but still manages to delve into some pretty detailed elements of language and how it's studied.

Even with topics like this one that aren't exactly perfectly suited to an oral medium.[01:04:00]

**Gretchen:** Hi, I'm Gretchen McCulloch

**Lauren:** and I'm Lauren Gawne. And we are the co-hosts of Lingthusiasm, a podcast that is enthusiastic about linguistics.

**Gretchen:** Something we're really enthusiastic about is how gestures are different across cultures in ways that don't always correspond to the languages involved.

**Lauren:** Take the peace sign. That's the one with your two fingers pointing out and your palm out. It spread to become a global gesture of peace and goodwill.

**Gretchen:** And at this point it's recognized by speakers of many languages.

**Lauren:** But if you turn that gesture around, so your palm is facing inwards towards you, for the people in Australia and the UK, it takes on a completely different meaning.

**Gretchen:** For me as a Canadian, it's just like, oh, backwards, peace sign.

**Lauren:** Whereas for me, uh, well, I wouldn't want to see someone doing that to me if I accidentally cut them off in traffic.

**Gretchen:** There are also gestures that show a surprising similarity across cultures, but appear to have risen completely independently in different places.

**Lauren:** In many parts of the world, there's some variation on raising your palms upward to indicate some kind of uncertainty. [01:05:00] We know it as part of the shrug, and I've researched this gesture in Nepal and India, where rather than the hand being flat, your last three fingers are curved inward, leaving your thumb and index finger pointing out. There's that similarity in the palm up that we see across Western Europe, across Nepal and India and other parts of the world.

**Gretchen:** And this kind of similarity is a reminder that regardless of the language we speak, we all live in gesture in approximately the same shape of human body.

**Lauren:** Happy hundredth episodes to the Endless Knot.

**Gretchen:** Stay Lingthusiastic!

**Mark:** Thanks Gretchen and Lauren. Our next guest is going to take us back to the 19th century. And then up to the 20th. Christine is from Footnoting History, a great show that brings you short pieces about small, but fascinating moments and events and people from history. As they say the best bits are always in the footnotes.

**Christine:** Hey everyone. Christine Caccipuoti here, I'm a producer and host of the podcast, Footnoting History. And I am [01:06:00] so thrilled that Aven and Mark asked us to participate in this their special 100th episode by contributing a surprising connection that one of us discovered. Here we go. Several years ago, I was doing my favorite thing, studying Napoleon Bonaparte and his family, when I discovered it. A Bonaparte had been instrumental in the creation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the United States. Federal Bureau of Investigation is perhaps better known as simply the FBI. I found this particularly interesting because it's easy to view European and North American history as separate entities.

And the name Bonaparte has a much stronger association with France than with the United States. But this was a distinct link between the two. In the early 1800s, when Napoleon was a newly-minted emperor, his youngest brother Jerome spent some time in the US and married a woman named Elizabeth Patterson.

Napoleon wasn't a fan of this marriage, in part because it meant now he couldn't [01:07:00] marry Jerome off in a political match. So Napoleon convinced his brother to abandon Elizabeth. Jerome ultimately remarried a woman of Napoleon's choosing and was named king of Westphalia. But before the split, Jerome got Elizabeth pregnant.

Elizabeth returned to the US with their son, also named Jerome, and thus began an American line of the Bonaparte family. Although Elizabeth wanted her son to have an elite French life, he was raised American and married an American woman. His son, Charles Bonaparte, graduated from Harvard law school and entered US political life where he became an associate of none other than Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt.

He served as secretary of the Navy and then Attorney General during Teddy Roosevelt's presidency. In 1908, while he was Attorney General, Charles created a small force of special agents to directly serve the Department of Justice. Although it wouldn't officially be called the FBI [01:08:00] until years later, Charles Bonaparte's actions in 1908 are considered the birth, if you will, of the FBI.

So there you have it. In a roundabout way, one could argue that Napoleon Bonaparte refusing to let his brother stay married in the early 1800s led to the creation of the US FBI in the early 1900s. It's a truly surprising chain of events, if you ask me. Happy 100th episode, Mark and Aven, we love you lots and wish you another epic 100 episodes to come.

**Aven:** Thanks. Christine, love you too. Hope we someday finally make it to New York to see you again in person.

And finally, we return to language podcasting with Carrie and Megan from the Vocal Fries podcast. A show about linguistic discrimination, and why it's bad. Obviously. It's a really important contribution to our understanding of the powerful effects of language and of the ways we react to it and police it and use it and how they matter.

Their story is a wonderful example of the amazing [01:09:00] community of podcasters and the ways we all benefit from each other's knowledge and skills and above all: kindness.

**Carrie:** Well, it's another hundredth episode! We're congratulating yet another podcaster for!

**Megan:** I know, and it's such a beautiful number and it's something to celebrate.

**Carrie:** This is definitely something to celebrate. And so congratulations The Endless Knot and Mark and Aven. Yes.

**Megan:** Congratulations. It's remarkable. And we're so happy to know you.

**Carrie:** Yes. Oh my God. Some of my favorite podcasters. Yeah. So we thought for our connection, we would talk about our connection to a particular podcaster Michael Hobbes originally from "You're Wrong about" which we both listened to. And then he started "Maintenance Phase" and we were lucky to have him and his co-host, Aubrey Gordon on our podcast.

And so we thought we'd just talk about that connection.Yeah.

**Megan:** And Aubrey Gordon also may be known to [01:10:00] some people as "your fat friend".

**Carrie:** And she was a delight. They're both delights,

**Megan:** I know, it was so much fun to podcast. It's always fun to podcast with other podcasters.

**Carrie:** Yes.

**Megan:** So I guess the connection starts with us listening to them, but, or listening to "you're wrong about", and then our podcast showed up in a bonus,

right?

**Carrie:** Right. Yeah. So the first connection, yes. Is Michael has talked about our podcast on their, one of their bonuses, although he didn't mention our podcast by name sadly, but a bunch of people recognized it and sent us like, Hey, we all wanted to connect with that podcast as well, but that just never happened.

And then I had an idea, when we were podcasting about food and an episode about food, I thought, oh, actually, Diet culture, because we were talking about healthy food versus unhealthy food and how problematic that is. And I was like, yes, we need to talk to people about this. And I immediately thought of Maintenance Phase because it's all about wellness and dieting and all the real problematic elements of that.

**Megan:** Yes. And they were new to the game. Right? [01:11:00] Pretty darn new.

**Carrie:** They were pretty darn new. And I just like emailed Michael Hobbes and he said, yes,

**Megan:** I don't know where he finds the time, but I'll say this about Michael as a podcaster, but also just, I think this is just an important skill or amazing skill he's honed, is his research skill, like it's beyond compare. Like I am like scientists wish they could research like him.

**Carrie:** I mean, part of the problem is scientists have to do like their own studies, so they don't have time to do as much reading, but still true. Like the amount of reading that he does is beyond compare. Like you said, he is exceptional and I am jealous of his research skills because I can't read as much as he does. I don't know how he does it.

**Megan:** It's a lovely connection. And I'm glad that we have it.

**Carrie:** Yes. And every connection with another podcaster is almost always a [01:12:00] delight. Yeah, absolutely. I'm happy to be connected to Mark and Aven as well. And absolutely congratulations again on 100 episodes.

**Mark:** Thanks, Carrie and Megan. We're so glad to be connected to you, too.

**Aven:** And we're so grateful to the whole community for these amazing stories and facts and for all the connections we've made to you all online and around the world. We're also grateful to all the guests we've had on the show over the years.

One of the best things about having this podcast has been the opportunities it's given us to talk to so many fabulous and fascinating people and the friendships that we've made through it. And listeners, we hope you found some new podcaster friends to listen to.

**Mark:** Thank you all again. We've had a blast with the first 100 episodes, and we're looking forward to another 100 episodes exploring all the connections in the world around us.

**Aven:** For more information on this podcast, check out our website, www.alliterative.net, where you can find links to the videos, blog, posts, sources, and credits, and all our contact info.

**Mark:** And please [01:13:00] check out our Patreon where you can pledge to support this show and our video project. You can go directly to the videos at youtube.com/alliterative.

**Aven:** Our email is on the website, but the easiest way to get in touch with us is Twitter. I'm @AvenSarah A V E N S A R A H.

**Mark:** And I'm at @alliterative. To keep up with the podcast, subscribe on your favorite podcast app or to the feed on the website.

**Aven:** And if you've enjoyed it, consider leaving us a review on Apple Podcasts or wherever you listen. It helps us a lot. We'll be back soon with more musings about the connections around us. Thanks for listening.

**Mark:** Bye.