

## Shmanners Episode 163: Auctions

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**Travis:** Going once, going twice, go—sold, to the podcast in the back!  
What's your name, ma'am?

**Teresa:** It's Shmanners.

[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:** Doing great. You know?

**Travis:** You know what, tomorrow...

**Teresa:** Tomorrow.

**Travis:** When you all hear this, it's Teresa's birthday.

**Teresa:** My birthday.

**Travis:** Happy birthday!

**Teresa:** Hey, thanks.

**Travis:** 22.

**Teresa:** [laughs] 22 was not like, an awesome year for me, so I—

**Travis:** 20...

**Teresa:** So I'd rather be...

**Travis:** 25?

**Teresa:** 34.

**Travis:** But that's how old you're gonna be.

**Teresa:** Tomorrow.

**Travis:** Oh. But that doesn't play into the joke of like, lying about your age. If you say—

**Teresa:** Well, I don't want to lie about my age. I like my age.

**Travis:** Well, my press age is 16. People are like, "How old's Travis?" "16." I know.

**Teresa:** That doesn't make any sense.

**Travis:** How about, my press age is 48?

**Teresa:** [laughs] That sounds better.

**Travis:** "How old is Travis?"  
"48. Hard livin'."

**Teresa:** [laughs] No, you would look really great for 48.

**Travis:** Oh, thank you. I'm— I'm chronologically 35, but spiritually, 72.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Um, hi everybody. So this episode, we're gonna be talking about auctions. And uh, before we roll into the history, which I'm sure there's a lot.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Have you ever actually been to any kind of auction?

**Teresa:** Nope.

**Travis:** Not silent, not...

**Teresa:** Nope.

**Travis:** A raffle?

**Teresa:** I mean, I have been at places where there are raffles.

**Travis:** Yes, I know, because your dad has won an inordinate amount.

**Teresa:** He... it's so weird. How does that happen? I don't even know.

**Travis:** I know. He's won a lot of raffles, I believe.

**Teresa:** He surely has. A lot of big raffles. He won a car, once.

**Travis:** What?

**Teresa:** Yeah, I know.

**Travis:** Did he actually like, drive it and keep it and stuff?

**Teresa:** Uh, I think that he traded in for like, a little bit of a nicer thing. A nicer car.

**Travis:** Oh.

**Teresa:** 'Cause the raffle car was not like, super awesome. So he traded in one of our cars to get a better one.

**Travis:** I see. I have been to... well, I won a silent auction once.

**Teresa:** Mmm.

**Travis:** Uh, accidentally. I was raising money for a theater in town. I was hosting a thing, which many people might have come... I don't know, maybe some people were there. And they had like, a silent auction going. And one of the auction items was like, 13 bottles of liquor or something. 14, 15 bottles of liquor. And I put down like, a hundred bucks. And then no one outbid me.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** And so, I ended up winning like 14 bottles of like, full sized bottles of liquor, for like a hundred bucks. It was a great deal. And also, okay— this is the weird one.

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Travis:** So growing up in my church, every year, I might've told you about this already. Every year, the youth group would do a raffle.

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Travis:** Oh, I'm sorry, would do an auction. And how it worked is, if you memorized a bible verse, if you remembered to bring your bible to youth group, attendance, bringing a guest, all of these things got you points. Which then, at the end of the year, you could use in the auction to buy stuff.

Which, that's the thing— now, as an adult, every time I talk about this, I think, like, that's pretty messed up. You know, we're gonna pay kids to come to church and let them get like, a football. I remember, one year, I was really excited. I won a Big Mouth Billy Bass. I was very excited about that. And a tool belt.

**Teresa:** You would be.

**Travis:** I know, it was great. But the thing is like, there were kids who, you know, I think like, there was a bike one year. Like, there was some pretty good stuff that was donated to it. And there were kids who would like, save up all their points to like, bid on the big items, and then lose.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** And it's like, well, now you can't do anything with those points. So, why'd you even come to church?

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Um, but, so, that, I think, that. And then, also, to mention your dad a second time, Teresa's dad loves like, car auction shows.

**Teresa:** Oh, yeah. He's a big fan.

**Travis:** So I've watched those with him a couple times.

**Teresa:** I still... I've watched those. I have no idea what's going on.

**Travis:** Well, the thing is, the most interesting part about it is when they're like, showing the car, and talking about the person who rebuilt it, and all the original... I'm like, "Awesome!" And then, it just goes into this blur of human motion. At the end, a car is sold, and I'm like, "What happened?"

**Teresa:** Or sometimes not.

**Travis:** Or not, which is a sad day for the car. 'Cause then I always think about that scene from Brave Little Toaster.

**Teresa:** It's homeless.

**Travis:** When the cars are in the wrecking yard, and they're singing the song.

**Teresa:** [whispering] I haven't seen the Brave Little Toaster.

**Travis:** What?!

**Teresa:** I'm sorry, I haven't seen it.

**Travis:** What?!

**Teresa:** Sorry.

**Travis:** Okay, tomorrow, we're watching Brave Little Toaster.

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** And I think Brave Little Toaster Goes to Mars is another one.

**Teresa:** Hmm. Weird.

**Travis:** Okay, so—

**Teresa:** I won a cake in a cake walk, but that's not an auction.

**Travis:** No, but I—

**Teresa:** It is a game of chance.

**Travis:** I did just, uh, for a second, forget how the cake walk worked, and thought it was a musical chairs where you sat on a cake.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** That's not it, right? You don't get to keep the cake you sat on.

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** Because of course, if you sat on a cake, you'd get to keep it, right? No one would want it after that.

**Teresa:** [laughs] Why not sit on all the cakes as you go around them?

**Travis:** Right? Just wop, wop, wop, wop. It's like, "Hey, stop it! You gotta pay for all those cakes now!" It's like, "No, I won. These are my butt cakes." So... Auctions.

**Teresa:** Auctions. Okay. Was this suggested by someone?

**Travis:** It was. And while you talk, I will look it up.

**Teresa:** Okay. Um, a brief history of auctions. So, the word 'auction' derives from the Latin 'auctus,' which means 'increasing.'

**Travis:** Oh.

**Teresa:** Okay? Probably one of the first recorded auctions was, ehh, not so awesome.

**Travis:** I'm going to guess maybe a human auction.

**Teresa:** Yeahhh.

**Travis:** Yeahhh.

**Teresa:** About 500 BCE, there are records of women being auctioned off by their families as brides.

**Travis:** Ew. Oh, no.

**Teresa:** Yeah, not awesome. But, the further you look into this, the further you find that it was all kind of a show, and it was really to gain prestige for the family of the bride, because if there was like... They would often do like, these like, super high bids for these ladies who were already like, involved with the suitor, and it—no money was exchanged hands. It was basically a drama.

**Travis:** So they—wait, so they were already with the person who was bidding on them?

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** So it was just to show like, “I would pay for her.”

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** And her saying like, “He would pay for me.”

**Teresa:** Yes. It was rigged is what I'm saying.

**Travis:** That's weird. Okay.

**Teresa:** So it may not have been all that bad. It was kind of like, a drama. Like a play.

**Travis:** Still, you know, if you tell me people were sold, even if it was a show, I'm gonna say it was bad. Yeah.

**Teresa:** Um, so, after those Greeks did the whole people show, um, the Romans were like, “Hey, we want to get in on this.” And so much so that everything began to be sold at auction. And I'm gonna start with the little things, and lead with the last one, the biggest one. So, uh, assets of debtors. Things they stole from other places.

**Travis:** Huh.

**Teresa:** Slaves.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** And then... So, in 193 AD, the entire empire, the Roman Empire, was auctioned off.

**Travis:** No.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** No!

**Teresa:** When the emperor was killed, Rome fell, because they auctioned the whole thing off. They were like, "Ehh, we don't care anymore. We don't want this."

**Travis:** Huh.

**Teresa:** Isn't that great? That's amazing. It's really like, the logical conclusion, isn't it?

**Travis:** Yeah. "Well, we've got nothing left to auction, except all of it." Hmm.

**Teresa:** Okay. So after the fall of the Roman Empire, auctions, not surprisingly, took kind of a dip in popularity.

**Travis:** Yeah. Yeah. You done auctioned your whole em... Whoops! You auctioned your empire.

**Teresa:** In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the British decided that this would be fun. But, we have to make some weird rules around it, because why not? Right?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** There was something called a candle bid, where the auction would only last until a candle burned out. Burned down.

**Travis:** You know I love something like that, right?

**Teresa:** I know you do.

**Travis:** It's arbitrary, and archaic, and a little bit like, creepy.

**Teresa:** Uh-huh.

**Travis:** As you watch as like, [high pitched voice] “Ooh, the flame. Ooh, the flame grows weak...”

**Teresa:** Uh-huh.

**Travis:** Ugh, you know I'm into that.

**Teresa:** The highest bid at the time of the candle snuffing itself out was considered the final bid.

**Travis:** I'm glad, though, that that went—

**Teresa:** So it didn't matter if anyone had more money. If the candle was out, that was it.

**Travis:** It was just done. I'm glad it went the other way, and now, it's more common to have humans. Because if I was an auctioneer, and I lost my job to a candle, I'd be really upset.

**Teresa:** [laughs] So, that's kind of like, the ancient-ish history of auctions. Nowadays, starting in 1674, the Stockholm auction house in Sweden was established, followed by Sotheby's, in 1744.

**Travis:** Is that how you pronounce it?

**Teresa:** Sooth-bees.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** I'm pretty sure.

**Travis:** Alright. I honestly, I don't have another guess.

**Teresa:** Alright.

**Travis:** So...

**Teresa:** Followed by Christie's in 1766.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** And that's the one that I've really heard of.

**Travis:** Yeah, those are all... At least, I think the S one and Christie's are still a thing.

**Teresa:** Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, but like, every day, people auction things off. On eBay.

**Travis:** Oh, yes, I have heard of it. Have you ever bought anything off eBay?

**Teresa:** I have only bought, um, things that were as-is, in the way of like, there was no auction. What do they call that?

**Travis:** Buy now.

**Teresa:** Buy now. I've only bought as buy now.

**Travis:** Yes. I think that—

**Teresa:** I don't have the patience to sit in front of a computer and listen to the dings, and be like, "Aw, I've been outbid by five cents." And all this stuff.

**Travis:** The other thing that you must know about Teresa McElroy for any of this to make sense is, she is the least competitive person I've ever met. So the rush of like, paddle, paddle, bid, bid, oh, they're gonna outbid! Like, Teresa gets nothing out of that.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** She just wants to buy it and be done.

**Teresa:** Yep.

**Travis:** Yep, that's it.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Where like, I have—

**Teresa:** I am happy agonizing over which one to buy for a very long time.

**Travis:** Oh, I know, honey. Yes, I do know that that is true.

**Teresa:** I'm very happy to do that. To compare, and contrast, and ooh, hem and haw about what I want.

**Travis:** It's not the same thing, but have you ever played bingo, like in a real bingo house?

**Teresa:** Uhh... no, I don't think so.

**Travis:** Okay. You would know, because bingo is surprisingly fast paced and intense.

**Teresa:** Oh, so no.

**Travis:** Listen. This isn't an auction, I get that. But if you ever get the chance to go to like, a real bingo house and play bingo, you should. Because like, you'll see people there who have bought like, 20 cards. And like, the bingo caller will say like, you know, "I 30," or whatever. I don't know what the numbers are. And you'll watch this person go, bap bap bap! And like, hit, you know, take their... Like I said, it's not auctions—

**Teresa:** Their little bingo boinger.

**Travis:** Yeah, it—ohh.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** But the speed at which a bingo caller goes, the speed at which you have... it's pretty intense. It's, uh, pretty intense. It's like, that and NASCAR, I think, are the two big, most intense games you can play. Is NASCAR a game? Anyways, back to auction.

**Teresa:** Well, so, eBay wasn't really considered a... [sighs] I guess it wasn't invited to the cool table, as far as auctions go. Until, really, uh, 2014. And I know.

**Travis:** What happened then?

**Teresa:** Well, the online art auction industry accounted for 2.8 billion pounds of sales.

**Travis:** Wow.

**Teresa:** Yeah. So they were kind of like, "Uh, this is really great for like, I don't know, old video game consoles, but is it art?"

**Travis:** Well, mostly, when I think of eBay, immediately, my mind goes to Beanie Babies.

**Teresa:** Ahh.

**Travis:** Immediately. Like, that's the first thing I think about when I think about eBay is Beanie Babies.

**Teresa:** Yeah. But apparently, it was art.

**Travis:** Huh.

**Teresa:** That's pretty cool, right?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Alright. So, now that we've done the history, let's talk a little bit about the specifics, okay?

**Travis:** Well, first, this is normally where we would give a thank you note to sponsors, but we don't have any sponsors this week. So, here's some Max Fun promos, and thank you.

[theme music plays]

**Allie:** Hi, I'm Allie Goertz.

**Julia:** And I'm Julia Prescott. And we're the hosts of Everything's Coming Up Simpsons.

**Allie:** [simultaneously] Everything's Coming Up Simpsons.

**Julia:** Every episode, we cover a different episode of the Simpsons that is a favorite of our special guest's.

**Allie:** We've had guests that are show runners, and writers, and voice actors, like Nancy Cartwright.

**Nancy:** I got a D-! I passed!

**Allie:** And we've also had people that are on the Max Fun network already.

**Julia:** We've had Weird Al Yankovich on the show.

**Weird Al:** I was just struck by how sharp the writing is. I mean, that's no surprise, 'cause it's the Simpsons. But I mean like, you can't say that about a lot of TV shows; particularly ones that, at that point, had been on the air for 14 years.

**Allie:** Find us on MaximumFun.org, iTunes, or wherever you get your podcasts.

**Julia:** Alright, smell ya later.

[gavel banging]

**Speaker 1:** Judge John Hodgman ruled in my favor.

**Speaker 2:** Judge John Hodgman ruled in my friend's favor.

**Speaker 3:** Judge John Hodgman ruled in my favor.

**John:** I'm Judge John Hodgman. You're hearing the voices of real litigants, real people, who have submitted disputes to my internet court at the Judge John Hodgman podcast. I hear their cases, I ask them questions— they're good ones— and then I tell them who's right, and who's wrong.

**Speaker 1:** Thanks to Judge John Hodgman's ruling, my dad has been forced to retire one of the worst dad jokes of all time.

**Speaker 2:** Instead of cutting his own hair with a Flowbee, my husband has his hair cut professionally.

**Speaker 3:** I have to join a community theater group.

**Speaker 1:** And my wife has stopped bringing home wild animals.

**John:** It's the Judge John Hodgman podcast. Find it every Wednesday at [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org), or wherever you download podcasts.

[gavel banging]

**Speaker 1:** Thanks, Judge John Hodgman.

**Travis:** Okay. More specifics.

**Teresa:** More specifics.

**Travis:** I like Data. And data.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** I like both the android and information.

**Teresa:** Yeah. Ignoring you now.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Auctions have their own sign language.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** Like a hand up, tap your nose, a cough, wave a handkerchief, flap your arms, pretend to fart—

**Teresa:** No. No. Uh, numbers are important in auctions, right? So, uh, the way you communicate a number would be one through five on your hand, the way you would if you were counting. But then, when you get to six, you gotta switch it up so that you can continue to count with just one hand, alright? So, sign for six is a thumbs up. Seven is a curled index finger, like...

**Travis:** Yeah, like you're hooking. Like you're scratching.

**Teresa:** Like red rum.

**Travis:** Red rum! Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, and eight is crossed finger, straight up, and nine is a thumbs down.

**Travis:** And then ten? You just like...

**Teresa:** Ten is probably one and a... don't ask me questions.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Alright, here's some more. If you point straight up and make a circle, the bidder knows you, uh... It shows that the bidder wants to take them all. That makes sense, right? Make a little circle, "I'll take the lot." Right?

**Travis:** Oh, I see. Okay, yes, yes.

**Teresa:** Two or three fingers in the middle of your chest is meant to signal to the auctioneer saying, "Hey, you got me, bud?"

**Travis:** You see it, right?

**Teresa:** You see it, right? You see me, right? If you put your fist in the air, it means you're sure that you're the highest bidder. And if you're wrong, the auctioneer has to call you on it, okay? That's just because of like, the confusing nature.

**Travis:** It's going fast, and you want to make sure, like... And if they're like, "It's not you." You're like, "Oh, okay, then one more."

**Teresa:** Both hands up in the air, each hand wiping the other, is like, an "all done." Right?

**Travis:** So is that like, "I'm out, I'm not going anymore"?

**Teresa:** The property can be sold. No more bids. So it's like, going once, going twice, sold.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Right? If your fingers are straight and together, and you move your hand with your palm down and back and forth, you're trying to tell the auctioneer that you're offering half of the amount you just promised, or you want half of the items. That doesn't make any sense to me.

**Travis:** Yeah, that seems like a pro level maneuver, you know? Like, there's some bids—

**Teresa:** I can't really imagine what that means.

**Travis:** Yeah, there's some bets you can put down, like in craps, that I have no idea how they work. And I've played craps many, many times. I assume it's like that where it's like... Maybe it's like if you, like if somebody

goes like, "Five thousand." And you say like, "Eight thousand." And you're like, "Wait, no, hold on. I could've done, you know, \$7,500." Or whatever. You could maybe then like, hold up, back, back, back.

**Teresa:** Right. So, we were talk... those are pretty much the bidder hand signals.

**Travis:** And how do you let them know, the auctioneer, that you need to pee?

**Teresa:** Um, you go before the auction.

**Travis:** Oh, I see.

**Teresa:** Those are all for bidders. But the auctioneers, they do that thing. You did it at the beginning, right?

**Travis:** [fast babbling]

**Teresa:** So, those are filler words, okay? That's anything that isn't the bid.

**Travis:** It's to keep the energy up, right?

**Teresa:** Well, so, it's designed as like, a chant. Right? And it's supposed to be kind of hypnotizing to the people in the room. It is supposed to create urgency, but it's also supposed to create a rhythm so people just kind of get in the habit of bidding, right?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** And it's described by my research assistant, Alex, as capitalist hypnosis.

**Travis:** Okay. Nice, Alex. Thank you again, Alex.

**Teresa:** I like it. I like it. Um, but, the important part is, like I said, the auction chant, which is three parts. The statement, which is, "I bid ten dollars." The suggestion is, "We got ten dollars. Now for 20 dollars?" And the

question, "I got ten dollars. Do I hear a 30 dollars over here?" That kind of stuff.

**Travis:** Could you do that one more time, please?

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** No, as fast as you can. Please?

**Teresa:** No, I will not.

**Travis:** Please, people requested it! People asked, said, please, talk like you're an auctioneer as fast as you can!

**Teresa:** Nobody requested that.

**Travis:** They did! Not specifically of you, but of us, that we would talk in auctioneer talk as fast as we could. Please?

**Teresa:** [sigh] I bid ten dollahs. We got ten dollahs. 20 dollahs? 20 dollahs? Do I hear 30 dollahs over here?

**Travis:** What's great about that is... That was very good. First of all, very good. Second of all, you sound a little bit like Janet Snakehole from uh, Parks and Recreation.

**Teresa:** [laughs] Yes. Yes, I agree. I agree.

**Travis:** Aw, this sad sack of potatoes...

**Teresa:** [laughs] Who is a sorry Charlie, this sad sack of potatoes...  
[laughs]

**Travis:** It's been a long day over here at the McElroy house. Bebe's been real fussy today. Teresa and I are feeling a little slap happy. Okay.

**Teresa:** Alright. Um, so, I said it earlier. The lot is the group of items. And just like me, my research assistant thinks this. Uh, when I hear the word lot,

I think of Harry Potter on the train, buying the whole snack trolley. "I'll take the lot."

**Travis:** I'll take the lot! I, also, when I hear lot, because I'm a theater nerd, the first thing I think of is Phantom of the Opera.

**Teresa:** Ahh.

**Travis:** Where he starts with like, the crate. All the stuff rolling out, and it's like, the lot is like, the chandelier, I think.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm. Um, go on the block. That's fairly obvious. It's when the thing gets up to the auctioneer podium. Um, the three Ds, or maybe five Ds, are giving—

**Travis:** Breadth, width, height...

**Teresa:** Ah. Nope. Mm. Mm-mmm.

**Travis:** Time... flavor?

**Teresa:** Um, the top reasons people sell things at auction. Three Ds. Debt, divorce, and death.

**Travis:** What's the possible fourth and fifth?

**Teresa:** Possible fourth and fifth, uh, are disease and denial. [laughs]

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Those are put forth by linguist Barry Popkik. He has some really great stuff to say, by the way. Anyway.

**Travis:** What's... it's a thing, right? 'Cause this is another thing I'm trying to remember from like, the car auctions. You can set like, a minimum to hit. Where say, I have a work of art. I decide that the work of art is worth \$15,000. And if we don't hit \$15,000, I'm not selling it.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** And so, they might start the bidding lower than that so that we can get people interested, at like, say, \$8,000. But if we don't hit 15, it doesn't sell.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** Because I've seen that in those car auctions, where, you know, you know what a car is worth, based on like, the market value, and how much work you put into it, and that kind of thing.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** And, but, you don't want to start the bidding at what the car is worth, because then people aren't hooked into it. But you also don't want to sell the car for less than it's worth.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** So that's why, sometimes, stuff goes up for auction, and even though people are bidding on it, it wouldn't actually sell.

**Teresa:** Exactly.

**Travis:** That happens in silent auctions, too. Where they say, like, this is worth this much, so bid that much or more.

**Teresa:** Right. Um, let's go on to things that you shouldn't really do at an auction.

**Travis:** Sneeze.

**Teresa:** Uh, I mean, people sneeze and cough and stuff.

**Travis:** You shouldn't kill someone.

**Teresa:** You shouldn't do that anywhere.

**Travis:** I mean, true, but... okay.

**Teresa:** Um, here's something that's not exactly illegal, but not exactly cool. It's called a chandelier bid.

**Travis:** Like Phantom of the Opera?

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** So, the auctioneer, in order to kind of drum up the drama for something that really should sell...

**Travis:** Will point at a fake bidder.

**Teresa:** Yeahhh.

**Travis:** Like you would point where the chandelier. Oh, right over there. Oh. Ahh.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm. And like I said, it is within the rules. But...

**Travis:** But it's not cool.

**Teresa:** It's not fun.

**Travis:** That's... who does... oh, yeah. Leslie Knope does that in Parks and Rec.

**Teresa:** Leslie Knope did that.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Here's another one. This is called shilling. And it's when someone pretends to be somebody else, or uses a third party to inflate the bidding price.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Right? And it is actually illegal in auctioning. And this is something that happens a lot in online auctions, right? And this is the whole reason that ratings have been introduced to a lot of online auction platforms. Because a lot of sellers won't sell to buyers that have poor ratings, and you can discover like, how trustworthy a seller is by their rating. Because if it's discovered that somebody is shilling, they obviously get a poor rating, and then they cannot either buy or sell things.

**Travis:** Now, I've always assumed that in in-person auctions, like the ones where you get paddles, you have like, given them like, some kind of personal information. Be it maybe as far as a credit card, or just like, who you are in order to get the paddle, right? 'Cause you get registered. You say like, I'm number 13. And then number 13 bids on it. So that way, especially if there's a lot of stuff up for auction, you can just stay seated and do it, and not have to like, stand up and claim the thing every time.

**Teresa:** I believe that there are some times that you do have to stand up and claim the thing.

**Travis:** I've never gotten to do a paddle.

**Teresa:** I haven't either.

**Travis:** But man, do I want to.

**Teresa:** I mean, I've never been to an auction is what I really—

**Travis:** You should go to one right now.

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, and then the last thing I want to talk about, and I have to say, once more, I love my research assistant for these shows. I want to talk about provenance. Where have you heard that word before? Provenance.

**Travis:** Provenance? It's like... is that like, your lineage?

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** What is it?

**Teresa:** It's the story behind the thing that you're selling. And we have heard of it on the...

**Travis:** Oh, oh, on the roadshow! The Antiques Roadshow!

**Teresa:** The Antiques Roadshow!

**Travis:** Yes, yes, yes.

**Teresa:** Oh, man, there was a time... was it when I was pregnant?

**Travis:** Oh, yeah. Ohhh yeah. We'd watch it on that PBS app. Oh, it was the most chill thing.

**Teresa:** So great.

**Travis:** Like, you know, your blood pressure is high, and you're stressed about having a baby, and you turn on Antiques Roadshow, and it's just...

**Teresa:** It is chill o'clock.

**Travis:** Oh, it was so good.

**Teresa:** Was that before we discovered Bob Ross again? I think it was.

**Travis:** Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:** No, I fell asleep too much to the Bob Ross.

**Travis:** Yeah, Bob Ross put Teresa to sleep too quickly.

**Teresa:** But I really wanted to know how much the appraisers were gonna give to people.

**Travis:** If you watch enough Antiques Roadshow, you start to build, like... Oh, that's my favorite appraiser. And you're like, oh, now, that appraiser always does like, weapons. And that appraiser always does old toys.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm. Well, they have specialties, of course.

**Travis:** I know. But the best is watching it and being like, ugh... every so often, you get this like, "Now, if you hadn't wiped the patina away..."

**Teresa:** Oh, no.

**Travis:** "This would be 15 thousand. But because you cleaned it, it's two dollars."

**Teresa:** Happens a lot with like, wood furniture. People think that they're cleaning it, and they're just taking off the varnish.

**Travis:** Ugh. Listen, if you learn one thing from this show, never polish antique weapons. Any kind of antique metal, be it candle sticks, old guns, or whatever. Don't. Polish it.

**Teresa:** [laughs] But that's not what provenance is.

**Travis:** Oh.

**Teresa:** Okay. That is the story behind, and it has to be well documented, right?

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** So you can't just make up a story to make it sound like this has been in your family forever, or whatever.

**Travis:** Or like, it was Abraham Lincoln's paddle ball!

**Teresa:** Exactly. It needs to be traceable. And a lot of auction houses and appraisers have ways of doing this. There are resources for that. I wanted to say encyclopedias, but that's not what I meant.

**Travis:** Well, that's okay. I mean, that's the thing.

**Teresa:** Anyway.

**Travis:** Another thing that you find out a lot on Antiques Roadshow. It's a great way to learn. Where they can say like, "We have this insignia on the bottom, and this picture of it in this catalog, and you have a picture here of this person holding it, and we were able to verify it in this book off of the serial numbers." All of that stuff.

**Teresa:** Right. So, here's the thing about Antiques Roadshow, right? It is manufactured, slightly. They always try and go to cities that are not super big, but not super small. You know, places like Boise. Right? Or Chattanooga or things like that. Just medium sized cities, because this is where they would get, um, people who are probably not doing this for a living. People who probably picked things up at estate sales, or garage sales.

**Travis:** Oh, you can always tell the difference. Where it's like, when someone is like, "How much do you think this is worth?" And the person is like, "I have no idea." That person, it's been in their family forever. When someone is like, "I think it's worth \$1,200." Well, that person just bought it for \$1,200.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Anyways, we're big fans of Antiques Roadshow.

**Teresa:** We're big fans. And so, what they're doing on Antiques Roadshow is, they offer two numbers, usually. The first one is, they offer what they would suggest that you insure it for, which is usually a lot higher, because,

you know, they're expecting it to appreciate in value. Poor wood furniture. It's gone really far down.

Anyway, and then, there is the auction value, which is given a range. And so, you probably wouldn't... you would still, probably, if you got it at a garage sale, be very happy to earn \$800. But they'll say, \$800 to \$1,200, right?

**Travis:** Because it's an auction.

**Teresa:** 'Cause it's an auction. You never know who's really going to be interested in it. Um, and I really like it. I especially like when things are like, family heirlooms, and people are like, "Aw, I don't care how much it's worth. I love it so much. I just wanted to hear about the painter." Or something. Right?

**Travis:** Um, so we have a couple questions.

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Travis:** This is from Keen. "How do estate sales work? Is it only wealthy people who have estate sales?"

**Teresa:** Absolutely not. My grandmother, when she passed, we put her things in an estate sale. I mean, it's basically... The way that an estate sale is different from an auction is, there typically aren't bids. But there can be. It can escalate to that point. And there's a lot of things in it that you wouldn't like, consider valuable. But, things go in lots, like I said, a lot. So you can buy all of my grandmother's china for a specific amount of money.

And the thing about estate sales is, everything is as it is. Right? So, people don't clean things up. It's kind of between a garage sale and an auction.

**Travis:** Uh, this question is from Marcus. "How many raffle tickets is too many raffle tickets?"

**Teresa:** Ooh, boy. I would say...

**Travis:** That was a strong reaction that I was not expecting.

**Teresa:** Too many raffle tickets is uh, outspending the amount of money it would cost to buy the item you want. That's too many.

**Travis:** Absolutely. I think the thing to keep in mind is... the context that I would need to answer this question is, is it a charity raffle thing? 'Cause like, if you're raising money for a charity, it's like, yeah, buy raffle tickets if you want to. But if you're just doing it like, "I have to win that thing," be like, okay. Cool. Maybe ten? I don't know. Like, how much is the thing? You know, like, if it was like—

**Teresa:** Yeah, how much is the thing worth?

**Travis:** Right.

**Teresa:** Because if the thing is not worth very much, and you spend a lot trying to get it, why... why? Just why?

**Travis:** Um, let's see. Now, Hannah asks, "Is it appropriate to puppy guard the item you're bidding on at a silent auction so you can immediately go up your bid anytime someone else bids?" I assume by puppy guard, Hannah means like, stay close.

**Teresa:** Yeah, stake it out.

**Travis:** And like, watch. Yeah.

**Teresa:** Is it appropriate? Mmm... Is it within the rules? Yeah. You can do it. Is it kind of a crappy move? Yeah. It is.

**Travis:** I actually think Hannah... even beyond like, rudeness or appropriate, I think it's a bad strategy. Here's why. Most of the time, with silent auctions, it's a time limit. And so, if it's like, bidding ends at seven PM, right? Just check the sheet at 6:55. And like, if you're still willing to bid on whatever the last bid was, do it. 'Cause most of the time, silent auctions occur at like, events. Don't waste your whole evening, or the whole event like, watching. Just go back and check before time runs out.

**Teresa:** That's a great idea.

**Travis:** You know, and if you get the feeling that a bunch of people are doing that, write down the highest you're willing to go. And if someone beats that, they beat it. Right? But like, I don't think you need to hover over it the whole time.

**Teresa:** But can you? Sure.

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** But don't. It's not a good look.

**Travis:** Um, let's see. We answered that one. Um, I don't know if I know the answer to this. Michelle asks, "What do you do if you are honestly just scratching your nose and never intended to bid on anything?"

**Teresa:** I would say that you hope that somebody else bids, and if... that's not really like a signal. I feel like that's the movies.

**Travis:** Yeah, I feel like that's a thing that happens in TV and movies, where it's just like, oh, were you... and even then, I think if you just started shaking her head like, "No." Like, they're not gonna be like, "I think that's a bid." That's a fairly universal human symbol.

**Teresa:** But really, all you have to do is hope that somebody else outbids. Or, if that ends up to be the bid, go to whoever is in charge. Go to the auctioneer after the bid is closed, and say, "Listen, that's not what I wanted." And hopefully, uh, they'll be able to remember who bid beneath you so that they can give it to them instead.

**Travis:** But that thing of like, coughing or like, twitching your nose. I think that's just movies. I think you're okay. Uh, so that's gonna do it for us.

**Teresa:** From what I've read.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** I'm not saying it never happens.

**Travis:** And even then, like I said. Wave your hands and say like, "No."

**Teresa:** Do that sign across your throat.

**Travis:** Eh, eh, eh. Just say, "No. I was just scratching my nose. That was a mistake I just made."

**Teresa:** Turn around and walk out.

**Travis:** Or just look behind you like, "Did you— did you bid?"

**Teresa:** Somebody else. [laughs]

**Travis:** I think it was them. They did it. Alright, that's gonna do it for us. We're gonna wrap up there. Thank you so much for joining us. Go check out all the other amazing shows at [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org). Also, we've got a couple tours coming up. My Brother, My Brother, and Me is going to be in Cleveland on May 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Teresa:** With Paul and Storm.

**Travis:** With Paul and Storm. And in Cincinnati on May 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Teresa:** With Shmanners and Sawbones.

**Travis:** Yeah. So, listen. Be there. We'll miss you if you're not there. We'll be sad. And you can get tickets at [McElroy.family](http://McElroy.family), and then click on tours. You can also click on merch there, and see all the amazing merch. There's a lot of cool Shmanners stuff there.

Oh, also, if you're a fan of The Adventure Zone, our graphic novel is coming out in July, and you can preorder by that by going to [TheAdventureZoneComic.com](http://TheAdventureZoneComic.com). That's book two of The Adventure Zone graphic novel series.

**Teresa:** What's the name of this one?

**Travis:** This one is Murder on the Rockport Limited.

**Teresa:** [whispering] Murder.

**Travis:** We're very excited. We're very excited.

**Teresa:** That's the train one.

**Travis:** It is. It's kind of an homage slash rip off of Murder on the Orient Express.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Let's see, what else? If you have ideas for topics, you can email us, [shmannerscast@gmail.com](mailto:shmannerscast@gmail.com).

**Teresa:** Did we say who this one was from?

**Travis:** Oh, I didn't. This is Aiden. Aiden suggested this one.

**Teresa:** Thank you, Aiden.

**Travis:** Thank you, Aiden. That's a great suggestion. And if you have questions, every week when we announce our topic, we'll tweet it from @ShmannersCast. And then you can respond with any questions you have about that topic.

**Teresa:** And if you have general questions, and just like to get or give great advice, you can join our Facebook fan-run group, Shmanners Fanners. And we want to thank Keely Weis photography for that banner art, and thank Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail, and thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for our theme music, which is a banger, and you can get as a ringtone where those are found.

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

**Teresa:** No RSVP required.

**Travis:** You've been listening to Shmanners.

**Teresa:** Manners, Shmanners. Get it?

[theme music plays]

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