

Shmanners Episode 169 – Trivia Nights

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Travis: This podcast, hosted by a husband and wife team, focuses primarily on etiquette.

Teresa: Oh – 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: I have to say... that... that intro? Very nice. Very funny.

Travis: Yeah?

Teresa: Not really what you're supposed to do at trivia. [laughs]

Travis: I know, listen—honey, the intros are jokes! That's where the bits live! So now we can get down to serious business.

Teresa: [sighs]

Travis: But that's where the jokes live. Of course that's not what you do.

Teresa: It just took a lot out of me to lie to our listeners.

Travis: You are not a good liar, that is true. You're a terrible liar. Not like me, the world's best.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, hey, listen, we're gonna talk about it. But how are you? Are you hydrated?

Teresa: I think so. Do I need a sip?

Travis: You should have a little sip. Okay, alright. She's having a sip. She looks satisfied.

Teresa: [satisfied exhale]

Travis: Ah, okay. Now we can talk.

Teresa: My new jam this summer. Iced hot chocolate.

Travis: That's just iced chocolate.

Teresa: Yeah, I guess.

Travis: I think there's some place, maybe it's Dunkin Donuts, that sells frozen hot chocolate, which just makes my mind melt.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Not because it's so good, but because the very concept.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: But listen, we're not talking about frozen drinks.

Teresa: Well, we should, because they're good.

Travis: Yeah, but I don't know—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: What's the etiquette of frozen drinks? Enjoy them responsibly. I don't know if you have to enjoy iced hot chocolate responsibly. Whoa, whoa, slow down. Think about diabetes.

Teresa: It's less calorific than chocolate milk.

Travis: It's calorific!

Teresa: No, it's less.

Travis: It's calorific! Cowabunga, dude!

Teresa: It isn't calorific.

Travis: Oh, okay. Hey, so this week, we're gonna talk about trivia. And the reason for this episode, if I might, Teresa's idea. But I have to assume it was 'cause I went to trivia this week and got second place.

Teresa: [laughs] We also used to go to trivia together.

Travis: That is true. When we lived in um, Los Angeles, us, our friend Tybee and other folks would often go to the Geeks Drink trivia that was like, two blocks away from us. And y'know what? We did pretty well.

Teresa: We did.

Travis: I would say we probably went like, 20 times. 20 weeks. And I would say, probably eight of those, we got first or second. Not bad. I love trivia.

Teresa: You do. You love trivia.

Travis: Love it.

Teresa: I'm on the fence about it, as far as me playing. I enjoy watching other people play trivia. I love learning new things. Um, but the thing about trivia is, you don't necessarily have to be smart.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: You don't necessarily have to, like, use your deductive reasoning. You either know something, or you don't.

Travis: Correct.

Teresa: And the thing about it is like, when I go somewhere and I play trivia, I really like it when I know the answers.

Travis: Yeah. Yeah.

Teresa: I'm less enthused when I don't. [laughs]

Travis: Yeah. It would be weird if you were like, "Y'know, my favorite part about trivia is when I don't know it. When I get the answer wrong." But that's the thing is like, here's the difference betwixt Teresa and I. There are many, but one of them when it comes to games like this is, I... there is a certain joy I take out of frustration and like, being competitive. Like, I'll be playing a video game for example, and I'll be very frustrated, because I keep dying. And Teresa is like, "Do you enjoy this?"

And the answer is yes, in a weird way. Because for me, it's that chasing, that when you succeed, the elation is heightened, because the frustration that came before it. And Teresa just doesn't feel it. Teresa is just happy all the time.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: But so, let's talk a little bit about trivia. Now, here's the thing. Just in case anyone has never been, the pub trivia I'm thinking of, right, is like, you go, you sit down, there is a host. The host calls out the question. And now, this takes different forms.

For example, the one that I just played in on Tuesday, there was like a wagering system, where basically, each round, there were three questions, and you had like, one point, three point, or six point. And if you really thought you knew the answer to like, question two, you would make that one worth six points. If you kind of knew the answer to question one, you'd make that one worth three points. And if you are completely guessing on question three, you make that one worth one point, right?

But that's not all of them. It's mostly, someone reads off the question, you write down the answer, you turn that in. Right? Just like that.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Is that how it's always been?

Teresa: No.

Travis: No. Okay.

Teresa: So, the first versions of trivia night were probably in the UK.

Travis: Yeah, that doesn't surprise me at all. It seems—especially since, nowadays, it's mostly referred to as 'pub trivia.' It made me assume.

Teresa: Yeah. Yeah.

Travis: And you know what happens when you assume? You are usually right.

Teresa: Is that how it goes?

Travis: Nope.

Teresa: Um, so these quiz games were actually very popular in Britain, and they really date back to the Round Britain Quiz, which was a radio show that was started in 1947.

Travis: Okay. I was wondering how far back pub trivia went. 'Cause I suspected it wasn't gonna be like a, y'know, Elizabethan kind of thing. It didn't feel like, back then, people needed an excuse to go drink.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: And as soon as trivia shows moved from radio to television, that's when it really exploded. Because by the '50s, late '50s, most pubs had television sets in them.

Travis: Oh, yeah, that makes sense.

Teresa: Yeah. And so, they... people would often shout out answers to the games as they were playing on the television. And so, people really liked to play these games in the pub atmosphere, and people started making like, a weekly thing of it. So when the trivia game comes on the television, we all go to the pub and shout at it.

Travis: Well, here's the thing that makes pub trivia make complete sense. Right? When you think about it, let's think about it from like, a business standpoint of, if you are a bar owner, right? What you are always trying to do is maximize the amount of time someone might spend in your bar.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: So if you think about like, a dart board, or like, a pool table, or billiards, or whatever—

Teresa: Or in the case of a college bar, free food.

Travis: Right. Right? At that point, if you're doing free food, that costs you money to do. If you're doing darts or pool table, that's like, two to four, maybe six people max. If someone is watching a sports game, right? Now you have to kind of operate on seasons, hope that people care about sports are gonna come in.

But with pub trivia, right? Once you start the game, you're staying there for two to three hours.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: And while you're there, you're going to buy drinks. And so, it's a good way to maximize the time someone is going to stay in your thing. And not only that, if it's a regularly scheduled occurrence, people then make a habit of it.

Teresa: Like a television show.

Travis: Right. They make a habit out of coming to it, and you're maximizing the time someone's gonna spend in your bar.

Teresa: And they want to, if it's a game, they want to win it. They want to recruit their friends, who they feel would do well. So you're getting even more people to your bar.

Travis: Correct. And a lot of times, now, the prizes they give out are gift cards to the bar that you are in...

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: ...which then, once again, guarantees the return. It's just, it's a good—and also, it's fun. I enjoy it. I enjoy it.

Teresa: [laughs] Um, so then, like you said, this was very profitable for the bars, the pubs. So they would start hosting their own events, not just when the trivia shows were on TV. Um, so, what this inspired, then, was the company Burns & Porter to start hosting their own in-person versions of the game on quieter nights so they could draw in more customers.

So they thought, like you said, we want to get more people in the pub. So, people really love this TV show. Let's play the game live here in the pub.

Travis: Another thing, just to keep pointing out, 'cause I do love pub trivia. If you think about other things like, I've seen bars that have beer pong tournaments; I've seen bars that have like, y'know, very loud stand up kind of things to get people in. Where quizzes are like—

Teresa: Quiet.

Travis: Huddle around a table, and you're quiet, 'cause you don't want to give away the answers. So it's like, even if you're not playing the quiz, it's not disturbing you, right? So another reason that pub quizzes are such a great addition to bars is it doesn't disturb patrons who aren't participating. Where like, if I went to a bar and wasn't playing in a super loud, everyone's drunk beer pong tournament, it might be a turn off.

Teresa: Yeah. Um, so then, Burns & Porter really organized these events. I mean, it was in their best interest to do so. So, they got together, they did like 32 teams in three separate leagues, competing head to head, and actually sending the results up to Burns & Porter to have like, league standings.

Travis: See, this is another—I'm gonna keep interrupting, 'cause like I said, I loove it.

Teresa: I know.

Travis: And also, I'm a man, and I interrupt. And also, I'm Travis, and I interrupt. Um, but my first kind of introduction to pub trivia was Buffalo Wild Wings.

Teresa: Oh, really?

Travis: Where they had those like, uh, Gameboy... like, it was like a little keyboard, right? That you went up to the front and got, and it was all like, playing on the TV screen, and you played. And the thing about it was, it connected to a computer system that then would like, show you your rankings around wherever anyone was playing that in that game system. And Dad is really good at it.

Teresa: I can definitely imagine your father being good at trivia.

Travis: Dad has been like... I think nationally ranked in like, BW3's trivia a couple times. [laughs] He knows... Dad knows a lot of ephemera. Because that's the other thing that I really like about trivia, is that it doesn't reward like, deep knowledge on one subject. It rewards like, "You know a lot of random stuff." And if all the pieces fall into place, then that random stuff is like, yeah, every question you asked, I happen to know about that.

Teresa: Uh, listeners, sorry for the plop. I took a drink of my uh, my cold chocolate, and my stainless steel straw in my stainless steel cup made a noise. Sorry.

Travis: Maybe some people enjoyed it. You don't have to apologize to them. Okay, go on.

Teresa: Um, so, very quickly, this took over the UK. In one county, there were as many as 500 teams.

Travis: Wow.

Teresa: Yeah, that's... that's amazing. And of course, like, something that popular, it came to America, and people went... sorry, it came to the US, and people went bonkers for it.

Travis: I'm not surprised. I mean, that's the thing is, we here in the US, uh, this might surprise some uh, listeners who are not in the US. Very competitive.

Teresa: Mm-hmm. And because it started in the UK, cities with a large, for example, Irish presence, like Boston, New York, were the front runners in uh—

Travis: That tracks.

Teresa: Yep, that tracks. Yep. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. And then, when the game, Trivial Pursuit, which had, y'know, like, ready-made questions, so you didn't have to even have like, a company come out. You could just have people in your bar play Trivial Pursuit out loud. In the '80s, it was a craze. Everybody loved it.

Um, so, so much so that today, like you said, lots of bars and pubs all across the world have their trivia nights, sometimes weekly. Some bars are dedicated just to trivia nights. Um, and it has become, again, a cultural staple. You mentioned Geeks Who Drink. There's even like, television shows with that name. Right?

Travis: Wouldn't Jeopardy be a different kind of show if people were drinking while they played on Jeopardy?

Teresa: Oh, totally.

Travis: That would be a different kind of show, huh? Alright.

Teresa: Really would be. Really would be.

Travis: Hey, Drunk Jeopardy? TM TM TM. That's mine. You can't take that.

Teresa: [laughs] So...

Travis: When they get questions wrong, drink.

Teresa: Oh, no.

Travis: Okay, alright. TM TM TM.

Teresa: No... I think that you should celebrate with a drink when you get a question right on Jeopardy.

Travis: It should be both!

Teresa: No.

Travis: And when you get a question right, you can make someone else drink.

Teresa: Uh... I don't know.

Travis: We'll figure it out. TM TM TM. Hey, we're giving away—we're giving away the cow.

Teresa: It depends on the game, because some games of Jeopardy are a lot of wrong answers. And some are right.

Travis: Well, I don't want anyone to die.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: TM TM TM.

Travis: TM TM TM. Um, yeah. Y'know, I was just looking... I wanted to see if there was a trivia night, like, that I wanted to go to here in Cincinnati. And

when I looked it up, just one company that I believe is called Last Call Trivia. There were like, 200. There was like... I would say, on average, five games... well, that doesn't equal 200, does it Travis? Let's say ten games.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Ten games...

Teresa: Just so that your math works out.

Travis: Yeah. Every night of the week. And even that's only 70. I know. Please don't tweet me.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: But like, that was one company, all across just Cincinnati. Just the Cincinnati area. Like, 70 games to choose from throughout the course of a week in different locations. It was amazing. I expected to find like, y'know, there's three or four good ones. And to have so many to choose from is a testament to how popular pub trivia is.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: And y'know what? I would like to talk more about trivia. But first, how about a thank you note for our sponsors?

Teresa: Sure.

[theme music plays]

Travis: Teresa, who is our sponsor this week, and how can we thank them?

Teresa: This week, Shmanners is sponsored in part by Harper Wilde. It's bra shopping, but a better way to bra shop. They have a really cool home try on system that lets you find the perfect fitting bra in the comfort of your own home.

Uh, they set out to design a bra that provides support, comfort, and quality, and they have a pretty attractive price point, which makes them easy to buy in bundles, so you can have one for every day of the week, even laundry day. They have a really great thing on their site. It's like a little quiz, BuzzFeed style quiz.

Travis: Like trivia?

Teresa: A little bit like trivia, I guess. Uh, where it can try and pinpoint the most frustrating parts of bra shopping, and make it so that you get the bras that fit you best. Um, let's see... they have this uh, this great partnership with Girls Inc. to lift up women around the world, and a portion of each sale supports mentorship and educational programming for girls.

I took a look at their website. It's very easy to navigate, and that free home try on is very attractive. Do like. So, it's time for all of us to get a lift with Harper Wilde. Go to HarperWilde.com/Shmanners, and use promo code 'Shmanners' to get 15% off your purchase. That's HarperWilde.com/Shmanners, with the 'Shmanners' promo code for 15% off your purchase.

One more time – HarperWilde.com/Shmanners.

[music plays]

Biz: Hi, I'm Biz.

Theresa: And I'm Theresa.

Biz: And we host One Bad Mother, a comedy podcast about parenting.

Theresa: Whether you are a parent, or just know kids exist in the world, join us each week as we honestly share what it's like to be a parent.

I don't know how to fix mornings for myself.

Biz: [laughs]

Theresa: I do not know how to make mornings okay for myself.

Biz: So the t-shirt, "I don't do mornings," isn't even a funny shirt. I shouldn't get it for you.

Theresa: No. It's sad.

Biz: It's a sad shirt.

Theresa: Yeah, it's a sad shirt with tears flowing.

Biz: So join us each week as we judge less, laugh more, and remind you that you are doing a great job.

Theresa: Find us on MaximumFun.org, on Apple Podcasts, or wherever you get your podcasts.

[music plays]

Janet: Hey, I'm Janet Varney. And like many of you, some more recent than others, I used to be a teenager. In fact, just about all of my friends were too, including wonderful women like Alison Brie.

Alison: I'm dead center on the balance beam. And this is like, a big gym. All the— kids' parents are there, watching. I have to stop, like when you have to pee so bad and you can't even move, and then I just go.

Janet: Oh, no. [laughs]

Alison: I just pee right in the middle of the high balance beam.

Janet: So join me every week on the JV Club podcast, where I speak with complicated, funny, messy humans as we reminisce about our adolescences and how they led us to becoming who we are. Find it every Thursday on Maximum Fun.

[music plays]

Travis: Okay, we got some questions.

Teresa: Okay. Well, wait a second.

Travis: Oh—eh—

Teresa: Wha—eh—

Travis: Uh—oh—

Teresa: I do have a quick and dirty list of dos and don'ts.

Travis: Okay. Well, but don't you think it might overlap with our questions?

Teresa: I mean, it definitely will.

Travis: Okay. You go first.

Teresa: Okay. It's important that you arrive early.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Especially if you have a full team. The uh, the rules vary from trivia night to trivia night, but usually, it's around six people maximum. If you have a full team, you gotta scope out that table early.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Also, it would behoove you to include different people in your social circle, because the wider bath of knowledge that you have, the better you'll be off.

Travis: Now, here's a—okay. To that point, and this is something I'm sure we'll touch on in answering questions. There are two very good, equally important reasons to go to trivia. One, because you want to compete and you want to win. Two, because it's a fun thing to do with your friends.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And you can feel both of those things, or you can feel one or the other. And that's the thing. Like, you don't have to win to have fun, right? But you should have fun when you win. Let's put it that way.

Teresa: That's true. [laughs] Um, I suggest that you nominate the person with the best handwriting to write all of the answers, because if the quizmaster can't read it, can't give you points.

Travis: I also will say, uh, another, along those same lines. If it's the thing where you have to take up each answer to the quizmaster individually, take turns doing it. Don't let anyone feel burdened by having to be the person who always has to turn in the answer.

Teresa: Unless it's Travis McElroy, and he wants to turn in the answer every time.

Travis: Well, okay. I mean, I don't want to. Not if I have to get up and walk around.

Teresa: [laughs] I think that it's obvious, but be quiet and courteous while the questions are being read, and while the answers are being read.

Travis: I will say, along those same lines, that goes for even if you aren't playing in the game. Even if you aren't participating, don't shout out the answer, because you know it even though you're not playing, like, "Oh, blah blah blah." And y'know, when the quizmaster is asking a question, be respectful of the quizmaster and the people playing the game even if you're not.

Teresa: Um, do know that anything within your surroundings that gives you a clue to the answer of a question, fair game. Something about, I don't know, if there's a dart board, and there's questions about the scoring system for darts. Feel free. Look at that dart board. Figure it out.

Travis: Except for cell phones.

Teresa: Of course.

Travis: Or any kind of tablet, or anything that connects to the internet. Just do your—here's the thing. You shouldn't even have it out.

Teresa: Yes, you should not.

Travis: Even if you're like, "Well, I was just texting my friend." Wait until after you've turned in your answer if you need to do that, or step outside. Because the thing is, like, even if you weren't doing anything wrong, like, don't give the appearance that you were.

Teresa: But I'm talking about your surroundings.

Travis: Absolutely.

Teresa: If it's a game like darts, or if it has to do with like, drinks or drink brands, and you happen to see that there's that particular brand on draft or whatever.

Travis: I was kicking myself, because one of the questions we got wrong this week was a question about Stella, the beer, Stella Artois, and there was like, a big like, thing of it to my right. And I like, couldn't remember. I was like, "I think it's Guinness." And we turned it in, and I was like, "Ahh!"

Teresa: Um, and here's one that you may not know. If the wait staff gives you an answer...

Travis: Tip.

Teresa: You should tip them extra. [laughs]

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: And feel free to use the wait staff, but you know, if they give you an answer, they'll probably give other teams an answer, too.

Travis: That is true.

Teresa: So it's not... don't expect exclusivity.

Travis: Are you ready?

Teresa: I am ready.

Travis: For some questions? Okay. This is from Valerie Gal. I'm gonna go with that. "What is the appropriate level of celebration when your team wins, especially if you win almost every week?"

Teresa: Ooh.

Travis: Here's what I will say. Implosion celebration, not explosion celebration. Does that make sense?

Teresa: Okay. Yeah.

Travis: Like, celebrate—

Teresa: 'Cause we want to be... we want to be, y'know, good winners as well as good losers.

Travis: There's a difference between celebrating with your friends, versus celebrating to the losers, right? Like, that's the difference of like, turning around and going like, "Yeah! Yeah!" And pointing at people who lost. Not okay. But like, hugging your friends and high-fiving your friends, totally cool. I would say. That's my standpoint.

Teresa: I agree.

Travis: Cool. Next question. This is from Hannah. "How should you handle a friend who gets upset that they feel like they don't know any answers?"

Teresa: Aw, man. Y'know, so often, that's me. I feel... not like I... I don't feel upset, but I... we've talked about my lack of competitive nature. I can pretty much just take it or leave it, and usually, I leave it. [laughs] So, there

have been occasions where I've really tried to get into the spirit of it, and not been able to really participate, because I don't know what's... I don't know any of the answers for those that night.

Travis: But I think that that's... like, that's the thing, is... if—especially if you're going regularly, like, not everyone's gonna know all the answers.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: And there are some nights where you're not gonna know any answers, right? I think the key is, if you have a friend that you know feels that way, put an extra special point on when they do know the answer. Like, "Ah, nice! Thanks!"

Teresa: Positive reinforcement.

Travis: And y'know, also, as much as you can while trying to be quiet and respectful and not give away answers, a little bit of like, table talk of just like, "What do you think? How do you feel about this?" That's another good way to include someone is, if someone else knows the answer, and they're like, "I think it's this," right? Say, "How do we all feel about that? Everybody good with this?"

Teresa: Sure. Sure.

Travis: That way, even if they don't know the answer, everybody is agreeing on the answer when it's turned in.

Teresa: Mm-hmm. And y'know, this is something that they're not... they're not all gonna be bangers, y'know? And I think that it's important to, y'know, keep a gentle reminder and saying, "Hey, you don't know any of these this week, but last week, you knew a lot of the answers." Or y'know, something like that. General encouragement I think is good.

Um, and y'know, just be attuned. Sensitive.

Travis: And that's the other thing. This is a thing that I struggled with for a long time, and now, actively work at, which is not always being the person

to grab the piece of paper and write the answer down. Like, the thing is, like, letting everybody have a turn. That's not to say, let someone write down an answer that you know is wrong.

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: But like, the like, "I got this, everybody just stand back! I'm trivia'ing over here!" Like, don't...

Teresa: I'm the trivia king!

Travis: Yeah, make it more collaborative. Uh, this is from JJ Cool J. Nice. "Is it okay to reuse team names? It feels like a cop out, but it's also kind of hard to be clever sometimes." I would say of course.

Teresa: Yeah, I mean, especially if it's the same people coming out.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: I mean, we tended, when we were playing hardcore, we tended to make a new team name every night, because we thought that we were witty.

Travis: Now, to be fair, we are witty.

Teresa: [laughs] But there were plenty of teams that we saw again and again and again use the same name, because there's a kind of—

Travis: They're establishing a brand.

Teresa: Yeah, there's kind of a following to that sort of thing I think.

Travis: Well, and y'know, it's just like... that's like baseball teams. Football teams. They use the same name. It's fine. Now, you're saying like, as you go from trivia, like, if you're going to a different one? Sure. Once again, if it's the same group, and you all like, identify as those people, like, "This is our team." Totally fine. And even if it's not that, if it's like, "I can't think of a different..." Yeah. You're not getting bonus points for your name.

Teresa: Or maybe you are.

Travis: Ooh. That's a cool game. I would say it's fine. It's one of those things of like, you don't have to reinvent the wheel every time. Uh, now, along those same lines, this is from Buddy. "How appropriate does the team name need to be at bar trivia?"

Teresa: Um...

Travis: I assume you mean appropriate like, not safe for work, y'know?

Teresa: [laughs] It needs to be not embarrassing when said out loud.

Travis: And not offensive.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: There were... I will say, Tuesday night when we went, there were a couple names that weren't outright, like, that would get you banned on Twitter. But it was more like, cringey. Like, ooh.

Teresa: That's too far. Like I said, embarrassing to say out loud. I think that a lot of people tend to go for the shock value, when really, what's appreciated is wit at trivia.

Travis: Let me tell you the team name that I really appreciated. Puma, P-U-M-A, Pants. Puma Pants.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Right? It made me laugh every time it was said. Puma Pants! That's perfect. That, to me, is very funny. That... [kiss sound]

Teresa: Because you don't—you're not embarrassed when you say it. You smile when you say it. I think that's the thing.

Travis: Yeah, right? I get it. That's funny. Our team name was Endor. E-N-D-O-R, the planet where the ewoks are from. Endor Voices.

Teresa: Yep. Mm-hmm.

Travis: Right? That, to me, aw, that's funny. 'Cause I was wearing an ewok shirt when we went. And I was like, oh, that's cute.

Teresa: That's cute.

Travis: Right? I think that that's... no shock value. Play on words is better.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Uh, this is from Christine. "Is it rude to play a themed trivia in your area of expertise and totally dominate your guest? Like i.e., Harry Potter trivia." Now, here's the thing. Yes and no. Because if you're at some place where this is being done, and you dominate, totally fine.

If you are like, "I am a huge... I know everything about Harry Potter and I know my friends don't, and I'm gonna invite them over to my house and make them play Harry Potter trivia with me in which I am the only person having fun as I wipe the floor with them," that is not okay.

Teresa: Yes. It's all of the intent behind it. Everyone can have their area of expertise. Yours happens to be Harry Potter, and if that happens to be a topic at your trivia night, that's great. Go team, because you're part of a team. But if it turns out to be more of a competitive against your friends, that's hard on a friendship.

Travis: Yeah. If you're arranging it. Y'know, once again, like I said, if you end up at a party where it's happening, and you win, cool. You studied the thing, you know it.

Teresa: Also, y'know, be nice about it.

Travis: Yes, definitely. Uh, this question is from Mary Lee. "I can never get people to go with me to trivia night. How do I scrounge up a group? Can I go by myself?"

Teresa: Um, a lot... it'll depend on the rules of the game that you're playing. There are some trivia nights that do not allow one person teams.

Travis: Yes. But there are lots that do. It varies.

Teresa: There are lots that do, and if you really want to go, that's a great way to make new friends. I would say that if you go by yourself, you could ask to join up to another team.

Travis: Yeah. Or y'know, if you're too nervous to do that, which I would be, go a couple times and slowly like, make friends with another team. Y'know, that kind of thing. And just, a lot of the reasons that there are rules against one person teams has to do with table space. Or just like, they don't want one person taking like, a six stock table for the whole night, y'know what I mean?

But at a lot of places, it's like, it's fine, you can just sit at the bar. I would say, as far as getting people to go, one of the things that helps is making it a plan ahead of time, rather than like, day of. A couple days out, say like, "Hey," or even a week, say, "Hey, next week, Tuesday night trivia, it's seven PM, who wants to go?" Let them like, plan around it. Because a lot of people, y'know, if they're evening is not free, they don't want to go.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: If it's something where, like, even if that's not happening, offer to buy the first round. But y'know, here's what it boils down to. If someone doesn't want to go, if they don't think they'd have a good time, like... making someone go to something where they're not going to have a good time, because you want to go, isn't great.

I understand the feeling, and I've done that many times. Right? And I've made the mistake of thinking, well, I enjoy this, and I think you would too, so let me drag you to it to prove to you that you'll have a good time.

Teresa: [laughs] I remember this.

Travis: Right? Where it's just like—

Teresa: This was... that was a very similar thing that happened to us... well, that you happened to me a couple times before we discussed the idea that we can have a good time...

Travis: Separately.

Teresa: Doing separate things.

Travis: Yeah. That's the thing is like, I understand that feeling. But if they don't want to go... y'know what? Also, maybe like... okay, this might sound a little cold and calculating from Travis McElroy, but stick with me. If your like, really tight-knit group of friends doesn't want to go, who are maybe like, the second tier friends...

Teresa: Tertiary friends.

Travis: Yeah, that you can ask? And maybe then, become closer friends with them as you're like, "These are my trivia friends." Y'know what I mean? I think that finding a shared experience like this that you both are into is a really good way to strengthen a friendship. So, that would be a suggestion from me.

Okay, this next question is from Sheila. "How do you respond to push back from a teammate when you feel in your gut that you know the right answer, but can't quite back it up with 100% certainty?"

Teresa: Oh, man. I think that this is something where it's a give and take, right? Where if... I am reminded of Finding Nemo, right? Where Dory is like, "I think we should go through the trench." And Marlin is like, "No, we need to go over the trench." She's like, "Just trust me on this." And then they go over the trench. And so, the next time when Dory says, "Just trust me on this," he listens. And that's the thing that kind of needs to happen. You may,

if you have that gut feeling that you're right, and you express that, and the teammates don't take that as a sign...

Travis: And you were right...

Teresa: And you were right, that's when you get to pull that card out next time. So it's like a give and take.

Travis: That is a thing when we played every week with Tybee in LA. Like, we established a like, vocabulary for like, "I am certain on this." Like, I can't tell you how I know, but I know what this is.

Teresa: And the more times that you're absolutely right about it, the more you get that trust from your teammates that you're gonna be right about it next time you say it.

Travis: And I think it goes both ways, right? Like, if you are open to discussion—'cause that's the thing. What you don't want to fall into is the trap of, "Well, my gut tells me it's this..." Every time. Where it's like, you might be wrong. How certain are you that you feel like it's the right answer, and how much is it like, well, it's the first answer that popped into your head?

'Cause it's okay to be wrong, but it's not okay to shout down someone else's answer just 'cause you thought of something first. And I think that's really where the table talk and establishing the communication lines of like, okay, how... That was what we would do, is like, if I had a guess and you had a guess, how strongly do you feel about your guess? 80%. How strongly do you feel about your guess? 90%. Okay, cool, we'll go with the 90% one. Right?

Being able to say like, how strongly do you feel, and then have everyone say like, does that sound good? Yes. Okay, cool. Right? Because at the end of the day, friendship is really the prize. Doo doo doot.

Teresa: Aww.

Travis: Um, this question is from Mackenzie. "How okay is heckling? What is a good protocol for correcting factual errors in questions?" So this is two things.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: I would say, even if you don't mean heckling in like, a bad way, but like, in a ribbing... don't. Because the thing is, here's what you always have to think about when it comes to like, talking back to someone on stage. Even if you mean it in a lighthearted fun way, or a helpful way, or whatever. They are one, and you, the crowd, are many. And it can be very intimidating.

Even if you're like, "But it's just little ol' me, I'm not being threatening." Yeah, but, when you're one person being looked at by 30, 40, 50, 100 people, and voices start shouting at you, it can be really scary. Or at the very least, off-putting, even if it's not scary.

So, I would say that if there is an answer that you think is wrong or a question that was like, worded confusingly, when the next answer break happens, y'know, they finish the next question and then there's a pause for people to write down answers, I would go up to them and be like, "Um..."

Teresa: That's where you plead your case.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: And remember, um, I mean, we've talked about this a lot. You catch more flies with honey than you do with vinegar. So if you are a person who has been heckling and y'know, in general, giving the quizmaster a hard time, when you go up there and plead your case... if it were me, I would not be very likely to give you the answer that you want. I mean, the points that you probably want.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Because of the, y'know, the tone of your behavior.

Travis: Tone of voice, body language, all of that stuff.

Teresa: Right. So, um, it really would behoove you to not make little jabs at the quizmaster.

Travis: And not like, [grunting]. But to be like, "Hey, you were wrong." And I will also say, then, the end result is, if you make your case and they still don't want to do it, that's how it works, y'know? Like, the thing is, if you make your case, and they're like, "Hey, I understand, but I'm not gonna give you points for that." Okay, cool. If it's that frustrating for you, find a different quiz night or a different quizmaster.

At that point... unless there's like, you like, paid to participate and there's money on the line. Even then, though, I think like... once you've made your case and they've said no, just walk away.

Teresa: It's not a democratic situation.

Travis: Correct. They're in charge, they have the final say. They said no, and even if that's frustrating, it's not worth like, pursuing further.

Teresa: And ruining your night, y'know?

Travis: Yes, agree. Um, let's see. This is uh, from Bar Aesthetic. "If you're with a rowdy group, what's a good way to keep them somewhat civil? I'm always self-conscious about saying, 'Hey, keep it down guys,' or something similar."

Teresa: Well, I think that um, rowdiness often... it not just distracts other teams, it distracts your own team.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: So I think that a good way to try and to keep everybody reigned in is to talk about how, hey, you guys don't... you want to win, right? Let's keep it—keep the energy up for the answers.

Travis: Once again, like I said – implosion, right? Focus the energy inward, rather than letting it fly outward. `Cause that’s the thing, right? Think about a sheepdog. When a sheepdog is shepherding, they don’t just stand and bark at the sheep to tell them where to go. They like, guide them, right? To get there.

So I would say, rather than saying like, “Hey, keep it down,” say, “Alright, what’s everyone think about this one? Okay, well...”

Teresa: Yeah, try and redirect attention towards the game, towards yourself, towards the answers.

Travis: Right. And y'know what? If you have people that don't... `cause we also got a question from Ray about, how should you handle half of your team not participating? Don't invite that half next time. The thing is, you can't make someone care about the thing if they don't. All you can do is play your game and try to have your fun.

And the thing is, it's frustrating. Man, I've been in that position. It's frustrating.

Teresa: About that, if you have half a team that's not participating, maybe your team is too big.

Travis: That's also true.

Teresa: There might be too many cooks in the kitchen, and they just don't feel like they have anything to contribute. So, half your team make two separate teams so that everybody can have a voice.

Travis: Uh, final question. This is from Brenna. “If you're prone to being a sore loser (example: me),” that's Brenna saying that, not me.

Teresa: [laughs] Although...

Travis: I'm not a sore—I don't like losing. Who does?

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: "What are some things you could do to combat that in the name of politeness and making people want to keep hanging out with you?" Um, so here's what I do. Yes, Teresa has alluded to the fact that I can, sometimes, be a sore loser.

Here's why I am a sore loser: because I like to win. But more than that, I play the beat, right? And what that means is, I start analyzing, "Aw, if we had gotten that question right, if we had won that round, if we had gotten that bonus, then we would've won." Right? That kind of thing.

Teresa: He shoulda coulda wouldas.

Travis: Yeah. Don't think about the hypotheticals, right? Because you did what you did, and it played the way that it played, right? What you can do is think forward. Where you say like, "Ooh, next time. We're gonna get 'em next time." Right? Push that energy forward to like, "Next time, we're gonna roll in here. We got them next time."

That kind of thing, where I think that's more energizing for a team to come back the next week to show that you're passionate about always improving and doing better. Or say to your teammates, like, "Hey, when you got that question, and you did that, that was huge. Nice." Like, celebrate—

Teresa: The smaller victories.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: As well. You don't have to win in order to celebrate the good moments that you had playing.

Travis: Correct. So I would say that. Once again, you can't get rid of... you can't make yourself not have the energy, right? But you can redirect where it goes. So instead of redirecting your energy to focus on the loss and how you lost, focus on what went well and what you'll do next time. That's way more productive.

So that's gonna do it for us. Thank you so much for joining us. Hey, we've got some McElroy appearances coming up soon.

Teresa: Woo!

Travis: Um, the next ones are The Adventure Zone book tour. On July 16th, Dad and I are going to be in Portland. Uh, Portland, Oregon. And Justin and Griffin and Carey Pietsch, the artist for The Adventure Zone graphic novel, are going to be in New York City. And we're going to be promoting book two of The Adventure Zone graphic novel series, Murder on the Rockport Limited. We're really excited about it. And if you go to those shows, you'll get a copy of the book signed, which is pretty exciting.

Teresa: Included in your ticket price.

Travis: That's correct. And then on July 17th, Dad and I are going to be in Los Angeles. And hey, listen. I'm gonna lay my cards on the table. Those tickets maybe aren't selling as quickly as we would like, so please consider coming, especially if you live in Los Angeles and you'd like for us to come to Los Angeles again. This is a good time to show that support.

Um, and then, on the 17th, Justin and Griffin are going to be in Austin, Texas. And then, on July 19th, all five of us, me, Dad, Griffin, Justin, and Carey are going to be at San Diego Comic Con doing a book tour show. And at all of those shows, we've got guest performers coming in to play the other parts when we do the live read. It's gonna be—

Teresa: Some real bangers.

Travis: Yeah, it's gonna be a hoot and a half. You're gonna have a great time. And then on July 20th, uh, we're going to be doing an Adventure Zone actual live play show at San Diego Comic Con. So you can get tickets to all of those if you go to McElroy.family and click on 'tours,' and you can see all the other shows coming up. And let's see, what else?

Go check McElroyMerch.com. We got new merch coming out all the time. At the beginning of each month, we try to do a new big roll out of merch, so here in a couple days, there will be a whole bunch of new stuff.

Go to MaximumFun.org, check out all the other amazing shows. Let's see, what else, Teresa? What am I forgetting?

Teresa: Well, we always thank Brent "Brental Floss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are sold. Also, thank you to Kayla M. Wassel for our Twitter thumbnail art. You can tweet at us, and this is where we get a lot of these questions that are featured in our show, @ShmannersCast.

Also, thank you to the newly renamed Bruja Betty Pin Up Photography, formerly known as Keely Weiss Photography, for our cover banner of our fan-run Facebook group, Shmanners Fanners. Please do join that group if you like giving and getting excellent advice from other Shmanners fans.

And, we are always looking for new topics. Please, submit your topic suggestions to ShmannersCast@gmail.com.

Travis: So, that's gonna do it for us. Join us again next time.

Teresa: No RSVP required.

Travis: You've been listening to Shmanners.

Teresa: Manners, shmanners. Get it?

[theme music plays]

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