

Shmanners 156: Breakups and Heartbreaks

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Travis: Did you hear about Humpty Dumpty after his partner left him?

Teresa: No, what happened?

Travis: He was really broken up about it.

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. You're very proud of that joke, aren't you?

Travis: I am.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: It was really... *so du*—sometimes I just make a joke that's so dumb that I fall deeply in love with it.

Teresa: Yeahhh...

Travis: 'Cause it's Humpty Dumpty and he—broken up, because breakup—ah!

Teresa: Ah!

Travis: Hey, everybody. We're bringing quality content like my terrible dad jokes, because it's Max Fun Drive! It's week one of Max Fun Drive! This is so exciting.

Teresa: Woot woot!

Travis: Now, I imagine that it's possible that there are some people listening who maybe weren't here for our last Max Fun Drive, so we'll get into the details and stuff later, but I wanted to give you a quick rundown right now before we start.

So, MaximumFun.org, the network that our show is a part of, as well as a lot of other McElroy shows, is a donor-funded network, which means that even though some of our funding comes from advertisers, it's only a small part, and most of the money comes from listeners like you!

And so every year, we do a two-week Max Fun Drive in which we encourage listeners to head to MaximumFun.org/donate and consider becoming a monthly donor. You can start as low as \$5 a month, and there are rewards at every level.

Um, and every level includes—I think we calculated over 200+ hours of bonus content that you're not gonna hear or see anywhere else. So, if you're interested in doing that, go ahead and do it right now. Don't wait. MaximumFun.org/donate.

Uh, and this is a special episode for *another* reason. We are doing a kind of partnership with *Sawbones* where we're talking about breakups and heartaches, and they're talking about Broken Heart Disease. Uh, so if this is an interesting topic to you, make sure you hop on over to *Sawbones* and check out their episode as well.

Now, Teresa, I've never been broken up with, 'cause [fake laughter] I'm pretty good—that's not true.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: That's not true at all. I've had my fair share of heartbreak, and I've done the heartbreaking!

Teresa: As have I.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Oh, goodness. Oh, this topic! So much fun. I'm so glad we've started off with such an upbeat topic for our first, uh, Max Fun Drive episode.

Teresa: Well, here's the thing: um, we've talked a lot about different, like, wedding-related etiquettes, relationship-related mannerisms, things like that; and it's only fair that we talk about the other side, too.

Travis: Listen, there's two sides of that coin. Do you wanna hear, uh... I think the only funny breakup of mine that comes to mind?

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Uh, I believe I was in first or second grade, and I was dating my friend Katie.

Teresa: You were "*dating*."

Travis: We were lowercase d "dating."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Uh, which I think means we walked home from school together, and we lived about a block from each other so we just, like, hung out all the time. Um, she's still one of my friends to this day! And she—I think we were, like, watching a movie in class, and she put her hand on my knee, and I said, "I think this is moving too fast."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And I broke up with her, and she went home and walked in the front door and looked at her mom and said, "Travis Patrick McElroy is *dead* to me!"

Teresa: [laughs] Aww, young—young love.

Travis: Indeed. Indeed.

Teresa: [laughs] It comes and goes so quickly, here.

Travis: I know. We were together for six years.

Teresa: Uh—

Travis: Um, and that was—no, that's not true.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: It was probably, like, three weeks, *if* that.

Teresa: Quote "together." As together as five-year-olds can be.

Travis: I mean, yeah, but—listen. Hand on the knee? Are you kidding me? [through laughter] Save that for marriage, okay? So, we're gonna talk about breakups, but specifically you wanted to focus on...

Teresa: I wanted to focus on broken engagements, because that's really kind of, like, the height of the drama, as far as the contract between two people goes.

Travis: And so you don't feel like you're missing out, we're gonna talk a lot about everything, don't you worry about it. We've got a lot of questions that are gonna cover more general breakup, both if you are the either breakup-er, breakup-ee, or a friend of that couple.

We also had some questions about, like, friend breakups, so we'll cover the whole gamut.

Teresa: Alright. So, like I said, we've talked about a lot of marriage, relationship business before. And I say "business" because for a very long time, history shows that marriages were more like partnerships for, like, a business-y type thing?

Travis: We talked about that a lot in the "Engagements" episode, where it was like, there was a lot of social mobility and business arrangements made. Like, especially—well, always—the parents saying, "Ah, let us join our two families and become more powerful than ever." Or it was like—uh, there was a lot of that with, like, royalty and stuff, too, right? Yeah.

Teresa: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Um, and—and another point I want to bring up from history is that for a very long time, the church and the state really had nothing to do with marriage. Marriage was a contract that two people entered in together, and—

Travis: Or two families.

Teresa: —two families entered in together, and they kept the church and the state out of it. So basically, the way to be married was to say you were married. So, it was like—

Travis: But then, everyone figured out how to make money off of it.

Teresa: Yeah...

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: It was a private contract. Um, and so the idea of an engagement really became the... the period of this "being married before being married." You know what I mean? Does that make sense?

Travis: I *do* know *what* you mean, but I don't know what you mean!

Teresa: Okay. [laughs] Okay. So, if marriage was a contract between two people alone, that would be our modern engagement.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And now that the church and the state have something each to say about a lot of marriages, then that's the next step after engagement, right?

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So if a marriage broke up before the church and the state had something to say about it, it was just the contract that was broken between those two people. Right?

Travis: Right. Oh, okay. So then eventually it became, like, a legal and religious thing where you had to, like, go through processes.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And before—and now that you have to go through processes, the engagement period is this new contract between two people, right? Before it escalates to the next level.

Travis: This is like—man. What I am about to say is one of the least romantic things I've ever said in my life.

It's like when we bought our house, and we had to, like, put a down payment down to start the process of, like, the contracts and the negotiations and inspections and all that stuff before we could sign the paper to actually buy the house.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: And that's... engagement and marriage. [sings the beginning of "Here Comes the Bride"]

Teresa: [laughs] And this isn't—this isn't to say that before the Victorian era there weren't love matches, because there definitely were. People absolutely fell in love. Um, but the Victorian era in Western culture is where we really start to see the engagement become that contract before finality.

Travis: Now... we have seen, whenever we talk about the Victorian era, how big an influence Queen Victoria and Prince Albert had, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Theirs was a *very* loving relationship. Did that have an impact? Was that a thing?

Teresa: It absolutely did. Um, it was very—the romanticism of marriage was very in vogue. And so, in that way, breaking up of engagements often had a romantic kind of... leaning to it, if you know what I mean. So—so here's the thing.

Travis: You don't mean romantic like—like, romantic like a... big deal. You know?

Teresa: Yes, big deal, yes.

Travis: Okay. The romanticism, not—capital R Romantic, not little r romantic.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Right. Um, and the breaking of an engagement was really a kind of scandal within society, because this wasn't something that you entered in very lightly. Um, and there were lots of marriage and etiquette manuals that strongly advised, uh, to break off an engagement instead of get married even if you don't like each other.

Travis: Wait. So, instead of break off the engagement, just go ahead and get married?

Teresa: No, no, no. The other way.

Travis: Oh, sorry, sorry, sorry. Okay.

Teresa: *Don't* get married, because—don't get married if you don't like each other. That's gonna be torture. Break off the engagement instead.

Travis: So even though it was somewhat scandalous—

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: —and could be a big deal, it's better than getting married if you don't like each other.

Teresa: And I think that that's the romanticism coming in, and really the ideal of the love match enters in the picture.

Travis: That just seems like such a difference from what I would think would be the case, you know? Like, I would expect in etiquette manuals and stuff, especially in, like, the Victorian era, that they would be like, "Hey, listen. Nobody likes each other."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "It's fine! That's not what this is about."

Teresa: We do kind of have that stodgy opinion. But, I mean, like you said, Albert and Victoria were very much in love. Um, and so the rest of the English world really wanted to emulate that example, so much so that the *New York Fashion Bazar Book of Etiquette* wrote:

"Although a broken engagement is something to deplore, it is not half so deplorable, sad, and lamentable as the miserable marriages which fill the divorce courts with petitioners for release from bondage."

Travis: Hoo, boy!

Teresa: Yeahhh.

Travis: There's a—a lot of judgment in there! [laughs]

Teresa: Yeahhh... I mean... it's—it's a lot about, you know, know thyself, and understand what you're getting into.

Travis: You know what's interesting is it seems to me to be a kind of example of something we talk about on this show a lot, which is—it's, like, the broken engagement, right? Is, like, an immediate, sharp scandal, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: But then it's done. Whereas entering into that unhappy marriage, right? Is, like, and then you gotta deal with this... forever.

Teresa: [simultaneously] Forever. [laughs]

Travis: And so it's like—that's a thing that we—you know, where it's like, it's way scarier to say something to someone and say, like, "Hey. Could you please turn that down?" Right? And the easiest thing is to just keep going, but then you're stuck in the situation, right? So even though the scarier thing is to take the immediate action, then it's done; as opposed to just, like, sitting there and stewing. Okay.

Teresa: Right. Now, down to the nitty gritty. Um, it was advised by Victorian etiquette manuals that engagements be broken off in writing, because—

Travis: For legal reasons?

Teresa: N—no.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: Not—not necessarily. So, it's often a lot easier to compose yourself, say exactly what it is you need to say in writing, without getting the emotions all stirred up by looking at the other person.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Um, and a lot of the romance of this time period occurred by letter.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Uh, so it really wasn't so strange. And, I mean, I have heard of people, like, "Should I break up in a text?"

Well... no, because that's not the way that a lot of our relationships develop through. So—

Travis: Yeah, but I—yeah, I—okay, I see what you're saying. Because—

Teresa: —so that's why writing the letter was advised instead of face to face, because so much of their correspondence—

Travis: Was that way, so that was the norm.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Uh, I also have to imagine—and I'm assuming, here—but at that time that, like, "Hey, let's sit down, just you and I," before they were, like, married was not... a thing you got to do a lot?

Teresa: There was—it was expected that there be a chaperone.

Travis: Right. And so you probably weren't used to having difficult conversations, or a conversation at all with the other person. And so, like, you probably had to cor—where I think now, it feels a lot colder if you've been having in-person conversations with the person the whole time, and now you send a text. It's—it's a huge leap back.

Teresa: That's what I mean. Absolutely.

Travis: Yes, okay, got it.

Teresa: Um, and so these letters were to be tailored to the sides of relationship. So in this I'm gonna say "men and women," because in Victorian era this is how people would have had their relationship. Um, women were told that the letter shouldn't even contain the reason why they're breaking off the engagement at all. Um, it should only allude to it being of their own sweet will.

So, kind of like "It's not you, it's me? I don't really wanna be married to you." Like, this kind of thing. There's nothing—

Travis: But I also have to imagine that something about, like, "No one's making me do this." Like—

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: —"It's not that my parents hate you, or that I found someone else."

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: It's like, "I've made this decision."

Teresa: "It's not you, it's me," right? "It's not anything else. It's me."

Travis: I mean, but sometimes it *is* them. You know? Hey, sometimes—

Teresa: But they were encouraged not to say that.

Travis: Yes, because I think in any era, no matter how far we come, it's never okay to look at someone and go, "Hey, we're breaking up. Because of *you*."
[laughs]

Teresa: Well...?

Travis: Wha—wait, hold on.

Teresa: When *men* broke off the engagement—

Travis: Oh, no...

Teresa: —and wrote this letter, they were supposed to present strong reasons for the breaking off of the engagement. Um, and this is because Victorian etiquette claims that men could do a lot more damage to a woman's reputation than a woman could do to men, so women deserved this explanation.

Like, "The reason why I'm ruining your reputation is because... our families don't agree, you don't have enough money, you are... you're in the wrong social circle." Like, all of those things, right?

Travis: So that way you could hypothetically explain it in such a way that, like, society wouldn't be like, "Oh, it's 'cause *she's*... you know, not great. It's because of circumstances."

Teresa: The circumstances.

Travis: The *circumstances* made it not work.

Teresa: Where—I mean, I guess I also suppose you could be like, "You're not attractive." [laughs] "I'm not attracted to you."

Travis: Oh, I have to imagine—

Teresa: [laughs loudly]

Travis: —that if the dude wrote that, like, everybody would be like, "Hey. I don't like *this* guy anymore."

I mean, listen. Maybe I'm just hoping that was the case. But, like, you would think decorum was like, "I'm gonna come up with a good reason," and not just be like, "[whiny voice] Because I don't like you anymore. [blows raspberry]" You know?

Teresa: Right. Well, this letter that we're talking about here—um, the manuals often instructed that the returning letter should be a calm—have a calm tone and try not to change the decision of the ex-fiancé, but, um... [laughs quietly] guess what? Nobody did that.

Travis: Nobody did that.

Teresa: Nobody did that.

Travis: Because who's gonna be like, "Welp! [blows raspberry] What're you gonna do? Alright, Jerry. Sounds good."

Teresa: There was *lots* of pleading going on. Um, and another part of this kind of back and forth was the exchanging and returning of gifts given.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And I think that this is where our modern engagement ring comes into play, but in the Victorian era when you were courting someone, you would often give them gifts to show your affections, right? Um, and these gifts had to be meaningful but not too meaningful, expensive but not too expensive... like, it was this tightrope that you were walking, because should you break up, you had to return these gifts. And so, like—

Travis: How did you do that if it's, like, food? If it's like, "Hey, I got you a sandwich."

Teresa: Well...

Travis: "Now return my sandwich." No.

Teresa: You wouldn't—you—you wouldn't.

Travis: They didn't do, like, chocolates and candy and stuff?

Teresa: I mean, I'm certain that they did, but you couldn't return that stuff. The things that people really wanted back were the really intimate things, like photos, love letters, locks of hair..

Travis: Yeah. Albums. T-shirts they left over at their place.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "That's my favorite t-shirt, Denise!"

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: "Bring it back! I got that at the Styx concert!"

Teresa: Um, and so—at this point, if you had an engagement ring, this is one of the things. You absolutely had to give it back to the person who bought it.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Or gave it to you. Um, really the only exception for that was if the engagement ring was an heirloom from the wife's side. Then the bride—

Travis: Then they kept it, yeah.

Teresa: —kept yeah.

Travis: Obvs, yeah. Totes obvs!

Teresa: But other than that, you had to give it back; no matter who broke off the engagement.

Travis: Okay. Interesting. 'Cause that is a thing now that I think is always kind of, uh, up in the air whenever there's a broken engagement of like, "Should I ask for it back?"

Teresa: Yeah. And we'll—I'll get to that. Um, but this whole giving back of gifts was so scandalous to these Victorians that manuals—these same manuals that I'm talking about—

Travis: They said, "Do it at night."

Teresa: —such as *Gems of Deportment*, which was written in 1881—

Travis: Did it say "Do it at night"?

Teresa: No...

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: They instructed ladies to *only* accept impersonal things, like flowers and books, so that they would be spared the regret of having to give them back if the engagement was broken.

Travis: Ohhh. So, like, don't accept something that you would be really excited to get.

Teresa: Yeah...

Travis: Ohhh... harden your heart! Oh, no!

Teresa: I know. Um, so... that's the thing between the two people, but there's actually a third person involved in the whole engagement breakup.

Travis: Is it me?

Teresa: No.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: That's the mother of the bride, the no-longer bride.

Travis: Yes. Why?

Teresa: Uh, she was the one in charge of breaking the news to friends and family that it was off.

Travis: Oh...

Teresa: Yeah... this kind of comes back today, too.

Travis: Why was that? Was that just to make sure that no young people rushed into anything?

Teresa: Well, no.

Travis: Or rushed out of anything, I guess?

Teresa: I—it was because... the whole breaking off of an engagement was considered too much for the actual people involved. Like, their sensibilities, right?

Travis: Ohh, uh-huh.

Teresa: Uh, too much for them to really handle.

Travis: Oh, like they have to go into mourning—

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: —and now—kind of that kind of deal.

Teresa: Something like that.

Travis: Someone else breaks the news.

Teresa: These Victorians were regarded as highly sensitive creatures, right? So if you—if you broke off the engagement and then you had to talk about it with all your family and your friends—

Travis: Hoo, boy.

Teresa: —that could be really rough on you, so someone else was expected to do it.

Travis: Not—not an enviable position.

Teresa: No. No.

Travis: Especially—I bet there was a lot in history of, like, if it was the bride-to-be's decision to break it off, and then her mom had to tell people, bet there was a lot of strife there. Like, "No, *you* call them."

"Ah, I don't have to, mother! Look at this book!"

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "See where it says—"

"Oh, you got me."

Teresa: Okay. So, that's the Victorian era. Let's talk a little bit about today.

Travis: Well, before we do... I wanna real quick remind everybody that it's the Max Fun Drive. Now, I mentioned this earlier in the show, but what does it really mean to be donor-supported? What does it mean for us to make money from the Max Fun Drive? Well, for example, one of the things we've been able to do is to

hire somebody to help us do research, to make sure that we have everything in order.

Because here's the thing: you know, life gets in the way. We have a two-year-old, we do tours, we go to conventions, got business trips, but we don't wanna miss episodes, because we know that they matter to you. And so we are able now to have somebody help us with that research, so we don't have to miss episodes.

Teresa: And anybody can do a Google search. That's not what we're saying. A research assistant really helps to cross-reference things, find actual places where they're printed, not just somebody's blog that says, "Blah blah blah." It takes a lot of time to do really good research.

Travis: And if you wanna see another, like, leap, go back and listen to, like—well, don't listen too much, 'cause they're garbage, but, like, the first 10 episodes of *My Brother, My Brother, and Me*. Listen to that audio quality. And we have been, like, fighting uphill since then to get the best equipment we can so that it is pleasing to your ears, and that is because we know these shows matter to you, because every year you come out and support our shows through the Maximum Fun Drive!

And, not only that, your support allows us to improve the quality of the shows directly. I will say, it's an exciting time, one, because everybody likes doing a drive with, like, a goal and stuff. But more than that, I love this time of year because you all take to Twitter and other social medias and stuff to talk about how important these shows are to you, and that means the world to me.

You know, right now we're sitting in our house, sitting in comfortable chairs, recording in an empty room, more or less. And, you know, we grew up—both Teresa and I, and in our adult lives, doing theater. And, you know, when you stand in front of a crowd and, you know, at the end they clap for you, you're like, "Ah, what I did mattered to these people."

And sometimes it can be easy to forget that when you're just, like, talking to a microphone and then sending it out through a computer. So, seeing people say, like, "Hey, I donated because I love *Shmanners*, and I love *My Brother, My Brother, and Me*, and I love *The Adventure*—" that means *so* much to us. But—

Teresa: You know what also means a lot to me? When people show their support even though they can't monetarily join us during Max Fun Drive. If you find that you are unable to make a monetary donation, that's—

Travis: And we've all been there.

Teresa: —and we've been there. That's okay, but you know what would love? We would love if you would get the word out. Tell people, tweet at people, you know, put it on your soc med, that these are shows that you love, and if you love something, you show support.

Travis: If you love something, *don't* set it free. Hold it very tightly.

Teresa: [laughs] Hold it closely.

Travis: Hold it so tight. But here's the good news—well, I guess even better news. Let me sweeten the pot: not only do you get our gratitude, you also get... some rewards.

Let me tell you about those rewards. For \$5 a month—and frankly, this is one of my favorite levels, 'cause I think it's an absolute steal. And I think that that's a thing that, like, everybody on QVC and NPR and all those three letter names say, but for just \$5 a month you get over 200 hours of bonus content that you're not gonna hear or see anywhere else. We have some video stuff from, like, *My Brother, My Brother, and Me* live shows that you're not gonna see—like, *early* live shows you're not gonna see anywhere else.

And, like, we did some riffing over some, like, educational videos from, you know, the 30's and 40's you're not gonna see anywhere else. Uh, and then we also have this year—and a couple years ago—our wives—Teresa, Sydnee, and Rachel—recorded episodes of *My Sister-in-law, My Sister-in-law, and Me*. Uh, which are so much funnier.

Teresa: Which I affectionately call Ma-slim-slam.

Travis: Yes. And they're so much funnier than our actual shows. Uh, and then also this year for *My Brother, My Brother, and Me*, we recorded an audio commentary track for episode three of our TV show!

Uh, for *The Adventure Zone* we recorded "Honey Heist" this year, in which Dad, Griffin, and Justin play bears trying to rob a honey convention, and I DM'd that one. Um, lots of great stuff.

But for *Shmanners* this year, we did an episode all about superstitions. Uh, we did an episode in the past all about farting? It was Le Pétomane, right?

Teresa: Le Pétomane, yeah.

Travis: The fartist. Um—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —there's a lot of great stuff in there. Um, let's see. So, that's for \$5 a month.

For \$10 a month you get your choice a beautiful enamel pin designed by Megan Kott. Our pin this year is a really cool, like, RSVP with, you know, the "no" slash through it, the circle and the slash. It was Teresa's idea, and it's really great.

Um, and there's lots of other ones too. I don't know why you wouldn't want a *Shmanners* pin, but there's a pin for other shows too, or whatever.

Um, then for \$20 a month you get the pin, you get the bonus content, *and* you get a really cool puzzle with a design that's based off of the view from the Max Fun HQ.

For \$35 a month you get the puzzle, you get the pin, you get the bonus content, but you also get this really cool glass mug that's engraved with the rocket logo of Max Fun.

Uh, and then there's a \$50 level, an \$100 level, and a \$200 level; and we know that those are gettin' pretty up there for a monthly payment. But, you know, just consider going and doing whatever you can, and becoming a donor!

Oh, and one last thing I wanna say before we get back to it. The way that it works is when you go in, a portion of the money you donate every month goes to Max Fun to keep the lights on. It's about, like, a quarter of your money. But the rest of it goes directly to the shows that you listen to. So, when you donate, you're asked which shows you actually listen to. You select those, and that's where your money goes!

So, if you would like to consider becoming a donor, go to MaximumFun.org/donate. Do it now. Don't—you know, don't think too much about it. [laughs] Well, do think about it—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —but don't wait, I mean, because you might forget! So, do it now. Be part of the magic. MaximumFun.org/donate.

So, let's talk about today.

Teresa: Alright. Uh, so the rules today are a lot more flexible. First of all, when you break an engagement, you do not have to tell anybody other than your partner—your former partner—why.

Um, it's not expected that there be long explanations, and frankly it's nobody's business.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: You know? You don't have to let the community know why you decided to break it off, and I think that that's amazing. That's really great.

Um, and it's not always required that the bride give the ring back. Here's the thing: uh, the only personal reasons that a bride would be inclined to give a ring back was if the bride broke the engagement and the ring is not from her side, an heirloom; if the groom broke the engagement and the ring is an heirloom from his family side; or, get this: when legal statutes dictate that the ring be returned.

Travis: Huh.

Teresa: So, um... here's the thing. The legal system is involved in many states, and there are laws in place that dictate if you—what are the conditions for either keeping or giving the ring back, because the law has gotten involved in the way of, "This is a contract between two people."

And we talked about that earlier. Um, but when there is dispute, the ring is given as—is presented as a... as, like, a start of the relationship in good faith.

Travis: Yeah. I bet there's a lot in those, like, legal statutes that are like, how much money has been spent to put down payments on stuff; like, what—you know, that kind of thing?

Teresa: I mean, if you're—if it comes to this point, and you do require legal services, there just has to be some kind of statute in place for dividing up assets, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Um, so, like you said, down payments, cars, rental agreements—and this ring usually factors into those.

Travis: I also bet it's a lot trickier now, 'cause, like, we lived together before we got married. You know, we were sharing a lot of income to pay for stuff, so I bet it gets a lot harder these days for someone to say, like, "I paid for that ring."

And it's like, "Well, but—I was paying for everything while you saved for that ring!" Like—

Teresa: "And you gave it to me."

Travis: Right. I bet it's a lot harder for someone to claim, like, "I *own* that ring!" And it's like, "What are you talking about? We both own the couch. You don't just own this ring." I bet it gets trickier.

Teresa: So, it really varies by state. So, the state—this is a list of states where, no matter what, if you don't get married, you have to give the ring back. This is within the court system.

Um, it's Florida, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

Travis: [sucks teeth] That's more than I thought it would be.

Teresa: But there are 50 of them, so—

Travis: Yes, I did know that.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Yes, Teresa, I was aware that there were 50 states.

Teresa: So there's a kind of middle ground—

Travis: And they're all nifty. Go on.

Teresa: Thanks. There's a kind of middle ground that happens when the states have decided that there is an implied conditional gift, right?

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, which means that if the groom breaks off the engagement, the ring is now the bride's legal property. But if *she* breaks it off, she has to give the ring back. Okay?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Those states are California, Texas, and Washington.

Travis: Got it.

Teresa: Um, and then... there's—there's a third option?

Travis: All of these laws, by the way, need to be updated to be like, "The party who," "The party—" instead of—

Teresa: Yeah, of course.

Travis: "—he" and "she," you know? Listen—

Teresa: Yeah, they definitely do. Um, but here's the thing. A lot of states don't actually have special laws. It's up to the judge that oversees the case. Um, and you can be... and, like, some of laws can even be so small that they vary county by county within a state that doesn't have a supremely reigning law, but there *is* one place, one state, that has *specifically* mentioned...

Travis: Can I guess?

Teresa: Okay, go.

Travis: Nevada.

Teresa: No.

Travis: Agh!

Teresa: Close. Um, the law says that whether or not the bride broke off the engagement, legally it is her business whether or not she gives the ring back.

Travis: Okay. What state?

Teresa: Montana.

Travis: Oh!

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: See, I woulda guessed Nevada, 'cause all the marriages, there!

Teresa: 'Cause all marriages. I—I guess not!

Travis: Huh.

Teresa: This is the one on the books that says, "Bride gets to do what they want with it."

Travis: Okay—okay, Montana! Alright!

Teresa: Yeah. Um, so for those other states that don't have specific laws, here are the things that the US courts usually consider.

Was the ring given as a gift? For example, was it included in Christmas, like, celebrations?

Travis: Huh. Okay.

Teresa: Was it included in a birthday celebration?

Travis: So if you propose, like, at Christmas, it's trickier.

Teresa: It gets trickier, yeah.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, how was the ring presented? Was it—

Travis: Was it in a cupcake?

Teresa: [laughs] Was it given—was it part of a display of other gifts? Was it as part of a celebration? Like, all these things really kind of go into it. And how was the ring received? Meaning, like, what did the person who got the ring experience in that time? Was it part of, like, a whole big thing? Was it—

Travis: Or did you kind of flip it to 'em like a quarter?

Teresa: No... no, no, no. Was it a surprise? Was it something that they picked out together? You know, all of these things.

Travis: Oh, okay, yeah. Where I could see, like, if you picked it out together, that's very different from, like, "I bought this for you and I'm giving it to you."

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Yes. Um, so normally, this usually shakes out that engagement rings are seen as gifts, and so it winds up that the recipient of the ring is allowed to keep it, if there aren't overarching laws that keep them from doing it. You know?

Travis: I think that that makes sense. Let me—I will throw a caveat on here to say of course I don't mean this in every case, right? Because of course there are special cases in everything.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: But there is something about giving jewelry—a ring to your partner, um... and it being like, "And you get to keep this, as long as you are mine," that is weird.

Teresa: I think so, too.

Travis: You know what I mean? That, like—it seems like it needs to be a gift. Like I said, in most cases. It needs to be a gift, or else it gets into some weird

territory for me of, like, "Oh, well, if we're not together anymore, then you don't get to keep—" then again, I say that, I don't know how I would feel if I was in that circumstance.

Teresa: Yeah, I don't know, either.

Travis: I don't know.

Teresa: Um, this all, you know, comes to say that no one is gonna, like, hunt you down and say, "You guys have to legally figure out what it is you're gonna do with this stuff," 'cause you don't—it doesn't go to court unless you *take* it there.

Travis: Unless someone takes it to court, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Teresa: Right. So in any of these places, if the two parties, like, solve it by themselves, you can do whatever you decide to do with all of the stuff, including the ring. You know?

Travis: Yeah. Hey, do you wanna answer some questions?

Teresa: Sure!

Travis: Okay. We got lots of 'em, which will surprise no one on this episode. Uh, this is from Keen.

"How do you deal with the aftermath of breakups when you and your ex are in the same physical space or social sphere?"

Teresa: Oh, wow.

Travis: Yeah, startin' off with a toughie.

Teresa: Startin' off—yeah. Right off the bat. Um, so I think that it is important to—for one of the people to vacate the shared space for a little while. It doesn't have to permanently—

Travis: I think it depends on how shared the space is, 'cause specifically in this question it says, "school campus." Like—

Teresa: No.

Travis: No. But I think if it's, like... for example, if I break up with Person A, right? And Person A and I always sit at the same, like, lunch table, I think it's my responsibility to, like, give them some space.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: You know what I mean? Like, I wouldn't sit back down with them the next day. Give 'em some space. But I think if you're both at school together—there's this thing in theater that's, like, public isolation? I think that's what it's called, of, like, how to be alone in public, basically.

If you've ever seen a kid at, like, a speech and debate tournament, practicing against a wall, it's kinda that. Um, where I think you can both be even in the same room, and not be in the same space with each other, if that makes any sense.

Teresa: Right, yeah.

Travis: Like, if you both make the decision of, like, "Cool. We're not talking right now." You can even be in the same class and have it not be a thing.

Teresa: Mm-hmm. And this is the same thing with the social circles, right? I never advocate splitting up your friends between the two of you. You can split up time spent with those friends, though. You can keep all your friends and go to brunch with them this week, and next week your ex can go to brunch with them. Like, I think that that—you don't have to break up with all of your friends just because you've broken up with your partner.

Travis: When it comes down to it, when you are giving someone space or time, or giving yourself space or time, really what you're doing is giving that person, be it yourself or them, a chance to re-contextualize the other person, right? Because if you break up with someone, and then you see them, you have been thinking about them in a certain way for a certain amount of time that—that's why it's kind of hard to see them, right? Because you're like, "Oh—every way I know of how to interact with this person, I have to change." Right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: "Because now—" and even when people want to be friends, like, it can be hard to reset that behavior.

Teresa: Yeah, 'cause you've formed a habit around this person.

Travis: Right. And so really what you're doing is you're giving them a chance to both re-contextualize that, but also process their feelings.

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: You know? If someone's really upset because of the breakup, and then they see you the next day, that's a lot to deal—you need to give people time to heal, you know? It's like if you broke a bone, right? You would need to rest. You wouldn't be back up there on the field playin' football again the next day. You would take time off so that the bone could heal. I think it's the same way psychologically.

Teresa: Absolutely.

Travis: Uh, this next question is from Maris.

"Is breaking up over text okay if you ask the person whether or not they're okay with doing it over text?"

So I guess that would be you saying, like, "Hey, we need to have a conversation. Is it okay if we do it over text?"

I doubt you would be like, "Hey, I'm about to break up with you. Is it cool if I do it on here?"

Teresa: [laughs] Um, I think that this goes back to what we were talking about with the letters. If text was your main form of communication before the breakup, or before you—before the breakup commences, I think that that's okay, because if you're not used to having a face to face conversation with someone, why would you have to do it just to break up with them?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Um, but... uh, this kind of "Can I ask them to have this conversation?" Um...

Travis: This is something I run into a lot, because it's tricky to ask, like, to have an important conversation and give someone the opportunity to say, "No." 'Cause it's like, if you say to me, like, "I have something I need to talk to you about."

Like, of course I wanna know what it is. Like, you wanna tell—I want you to tell me, so even if I don't *really* want you to tell me through the medium you're using.

I would say, if you—I would say it would be better in that circumstance to send it in an email, right? Like, type out your whole feelings about everything and say—the thing is, Maris, one, I would say that a big factor here would be how much, like—what kind of relationship are you actually in? Like, if you've been on three or four dates with someone, breaking it off via text message I think is fine.

Teresa: 'Cause—'cause the investment is low.

Travis: Correct.

Teresa: And we consider text messaging to also be a low stakes investment.

Travis: But I also think that when it comes down to it, what you're really talking about is the difference between practicality and idealism, right? In an ideal world, you would sit down and explain it face to face with the person, or whatever.

But if you need to use text, if you need to use an email, if you need to send a letter, and that's what *you* need to do, like—I know that I have a lot of trouble confronting people, right? And so, like, in the past when I've needed to, like, ask for a raise or do something like that, I could express myself better, and actually *do* it, via, like, sending a letter or an email, where I couldn't face to face.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: You know? So I would say, like, really what it comes down to is examining your own motivations, and why you're deciding to use the method you're using. And if it's the right method for the situation, I think it's okay.

Teresa: Alright.

Travis: I—I apparently have very strong feelings about this!

Teresa: Apparently you do!

Travis: Hoo, boy! Alright. Uh, this is from Tate.

"What's the best way to respond when someone's sad over a breakup from a relationship that was bad for them?"

Teresa: I think that you can, um... you can help to comfort a person without condoning the entire situation.

Travis: Yeah. I think so, too.

Teresa: Um, I would recommend that you probably wait—wait a little bit, give 'em some space before you begin to say, "Well, they weren't really very good for you anyway."

Travis: Yeah...

Teresa: That kind of stuff. That—we want to comfort. We don't want to escalate anything. [laughs]

Travis: And you also don't wanna invalidate, because someone can both be sad over a breakup *and* the relationship be bad. Like, those two things aren't mutually exclusive, because really someone's experience, you know, is, like—they might, you know, miss the comfort of having someone, or whatever.

And so, I think the comforting way to come in is like, "I'm sorry you feel this way. I'm here for you." Rather than saying something like, "[loudly] Don't be sad! This is great!" Like...

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Don't invalidate their feelings.

Teresa: Absolutely.

Travis: Um... let's see. Um... this is from @projectaeolus.

"Is it better in the long run to try to be friends after a breakup, or to cut off the relationship completely?"

Teresa: Again, this is a highly personal situation. I have had breakups where it's taken a long time to be able to be friends, or even just think of that person as a friend; and other breakups where it was—it was nearly instantaneous.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Um, it really depends on the situation. But I do think it has to be mutual. If you find that you are ready to be friends, and the ex isn't, you have to respect that.

Um... [poshly] It brings to mind a, uh—

Travis: [poshly] Oh?

Teresa: [laughs] [poshly] An episode—

Travis: [poshly] Oh, does it?

Teresa: [poshly] An episode of Parks and Rec.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: Where Leslie and Ben are broken up—

Travis: And it's one of the many episode where they're dealing with the fact that they can't be friends.

Teresa: —where they're dealing with the fact that it's just too hard for them to be friends again without being more than friends, for Ben especially. But Leslie is always pushing and pushing. She wants to hang out with Ben all the time. And this is a really tough thing in their relationship for several episodes. So, it has to be mutual.

Travis: The thing is, a lot of that can be—and I'm not saying this is always the case, but sometimes the motivation for people wanting to be friends with their exes is, like, if you break up with someone, it's really tempting to want to be friends with them to know that it's okay, that they're not mad at you—

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: —to know that you're not a bad person 'cause you're still fr—like, they still like you. That's something for me a lot, that, like, I will have any kind of confrontation or tough conversation with someone and then *immediately* want some kind of validation from them that they still like me.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And I think that, like we were talking about with giving space, that can be really unhealthy for the other person of, like, that just isn't how it always works, you know?

Teresa: And especially if there are still romantic feelings on one side instead of the other. You really need to wait those out and be able to sort through those feelings before friendship can happen. And when you break up with someone, you give them autonomy over their own timeline.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: You have no—no way to say, "You have to be okay with this right now." That is not the way that this works.

Travis: I also think—you know, like I mentioned earlier, the re-contextualizing of, like, if you're hoping to be friends with an ex, rather than—like, if you guys used to hang out for hours and hours and hours, this time just ask 'em to grab coffee in a public place, you know, hang out for, like, 20, 30 minutes.

Teresa: Something very low stakes.

Travis: Right, and then do that again sometimes later. But you can't be like, "I wanna get back to where we were, but just as friends!" Like, no, you need to set up new processes and new procedures when you hang out with each other.

Um, you know what? Before—we have lots more questions, and we'll do them, but first, Teresa? Can you tell me what's so special about MaximumFun.org?

Teresa: Well, I think that the most special thing that happens is when people who love podcasts get together. They create a kind of, like, family atmosphere, and Max Fun really does this very, very well.

Um, people come together over their mutual love of these shows, and they show their support. They support each other. They find new shows that they like. This Max Fun fam that we've created is something that is just an awesome thing to join! And the way that you join is you... love Max Fun podcasts—

Travis: Step one.

Teresa: —step one. Step two is you show your support by pledging a small donation every month!

Travis: Yeah, you can start as low as \$5 a month which is, like, 1/3 of a movie ticket or one coffee drink a month. Um, and in doing so you get all kinds of bonus content and positive feelings, and it's great.

There's other levels, too. You can go to MaximumFun.org/donate and check those out. Um, and you know what? It would just be great. We sure would appreciate it. MaximumFun.org/donate.

But I also wanted to tell everyone about Max Fun Meetup Day. So, if you go the MaximumFun.org/meetups2019, you can see a list of meetups all over the place. There's some in... let's see. There's some in Canada, one in British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec. Uh, there's one in Denmark, England, all over the place, and a bunch in the United States, including, uh, my and Teresa's home city of Cincinnati.

That's gonna be on Tuesday, at The Rook. Let's see... Tuesday the 26th? Yes. Tuesday the 26th at 7 PM, local time. Ours is at The Rook here in Cincinnati. It's like a board game bar. I'm going to be there, so if you wanna come and say hi to me and see some other Max Funsters, do that! Uh, like I said, MaximumFun.org/meetups2019.

Um, and one last time, I just wanted to say—well, it's not the last time. I'm gonna say it again at the end of the episode, but—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —consider going to MaximumFun.org/donate and becoming a donor right now! Why not this year? And you know what? Maybe you're already a donor. If so, thank you, but maybe this is the year to upgrade your donations!

Maybe you got a raise, maybe you're feeling especially generous this year, maybe you started listening to more shows, maybe Max Fun has become an even bigger part of your life. Uh, well, this is the perfect time to upgrade, because when you upgrade, you get the same rewards that everyone else gets for becoming a new donor!

Uh, same MaximumFun.org/donate. You can upgrade there. And you know what? Just as a reminder, 'cause I always like to throw this in, it's also a great time to update your credit card information—

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: —because, you know, credit cards expire, addresses change, stuff like that, and we forget to update it on the website, and we lose some donations every year.

Teresa: Yeah, so you may already be a Max Fun donor, and your credit card information changed, and so now, this is the time to update it!

Travis: So, yeah! Consider updating your stuff, upgrading your donation, joining, MaximumFun.org/donate, and I'll see you at the meetup. And now, more questions!

This is from Kaitlin.

"How can you be—uh, how best can you be a supportive friend when someone you know is going through a breakup?"

Teresa: Um... I think it's just about filling the time gap. Um, when people are in a relationship, they spend a lot of time together, and so that time can feel very empty for a person.

Travis: Yeah, that's a good one, yeah.

Teresa: So if you want to show your support, be there for them. Be physically there. You don't even have to do anything. You don't have to say anything. Just come over and watch a movie with them.

Travis: Just be there.

Teresa: You know? Be physically there for them. Fill that time so that they're not alone.

Travis: Um, if it were me—this is where we start to get into a little bit of, like, Teresa and I aren't psychologists, experts, aren't therapists, aren't trained professionals, so the advice I am about to give is what *I* would do, not what I'm saying *you* should do.

But if it were me, I think that in the past I've tried to be, like, a distracting friend, and I think I'd rather be, now, a friend who says, "Talk to me."

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Right? Help process, help discuss—because that's the other thing. I also used to be the friend who would say, like, "*Here's* how you should feel. Don't be down, be like this! It's gonna be okay!"

All that stuff. But that's me telling them how to feel, rather than letting them tell me how they feel and what they need. Um, let your friend tell you what they need, basically. You know? Say, "Hey, what can I do for you. I'm here. Do you just wanna, like, watch a movie? Cool! I'm here for that."

Instead of saying, "*I* know what you need. *I'm* gonna take you to this place, and *I'm* gonna tell you how to feel." Instead, let them tell you what they need.

Teresa: Love it.

Travis: That's what I would do. This is from Brandon.

"How do I tell a person I'm not in a position in my life to date without it sounding like a cop out?"

Teresa: Um... I think it's about the way that you say it, the presentation, the, um... and, and, the way that you focus on the "I" statements, right? Um, "I really enjoy this new business, the time I spend with my new business right now, and *I* can't make a commitment to anything else." Or... making it so that you can talk about the things that *are* occupying the time, so that you don't feel like, "Well, you're—it's just not the right time. Maybe come back later?"

Sometimes that's not what you mean.

Travis: Yeah. That's the thing of, like, "You know, I just don't know if right now—" instead say, like, "This isn't what I want—" because here's the thing: once again, I think that what you're looking for, whenever you—on some level, and maybe this is just me, but I don't think it is—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —on some level, when you are explaining your reasons for breaking up with someone, what you *really* deep down hope they'll say is, like, "Yeah, that *totally* makes sense! You're a great person!"

And, like, that's not always gonna happen, you know what I mean? So, like, you're not always going to be able to explain it in such a way. So instead, I think it's better just to be honest and direct, while still, like, managing someone's feelings, you know? Keeping that in mind.

But I think human beings have a tendency to, like, hedge their explanations to make it sound not so... serious, and not so blunt. And say, like, "And you know what? Maybe—" nope. Don't. Don't do that.

Teresa: Don't do that.

Travis: Say, like, "I—there is no place in my life right now. I am not at a place in my life. I just—this isn't right." You know? Like, "It wouldn't be right for you, and I can't put you first," that kind of thing.

Rather than saying, like, "And you know, if we see each other again, maybe, who knows, blah, blah, blah—"

Teresa: What was that movie that you love with the book and the writing, John Cusack thing?

Travis: Huh.

Teresa: Um... [laughs]

Travis: That movie with the—*Serendipity*.

Teresa: Yes!

Travis: *Serend*—I wouldn't say I *loved Serendipity*. [laughs]

Teresa: [through laughter] Well, you—

Travis: I wouldn't say I *loved* it.

Teresa: You wouldn't say you *love* it.

Travis: No, I—I will say, there was a time in my life where I needed romantic comedies—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —'cause I was—I didn't have you, [shakily] and I needed to fill the—
[fake sobbing]

Teresa: Oh my gosh.

Travis: No, I'm fine. Um... this question is from Nush.

"Is there a way to break off a friendship?"

Teresa: There is. Um...

Travis: Change your name...

Teresa: Uh—[snorts] No.

Travis: No.

Teresa: Uh, but you need to—you need to be prepared for several friendships to end, if this is what you want.

Travis: I think it's so much trickier to end a friendship than, like, a dating, romantic relationship.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Because a romantic relationship can often be, like, yes or no. Right? Like, not saying all the time, but most of the time if you're thinking about it in terms of, like, "Either we are together, or we are not."

Teresa: [simultaneously] "Or we are not."

Travis: Where a friendship can be so much more—there are so many more, like, levels to it. Um, and—like, for example, I would never advocate for, like, ghosting out of a romantic relationship, but there are certain levels of friendship where I would say, like, you know, just stop making plans with that person. It's fine.

Teresa: Uh, right. If it's a very casual friendship, I don't think that—and you're doing a lot of the "Let's get together"-ing—

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: —if you just stop including them in the "Let's get together," then you effectively can end that relationship.

Travis: Right. And, like I said, not in every level—

Teresa: Right. A very casual thing.

Travis: —but if it's like, "Oh, I keep seeing them at this thing." Like, okay. Well, don't see 'em at that thing, you know?

Teresa: Yeah. Um, but if it's a really personal relationship that you have with someone, I think that you really do have to treat it like a breakup, and say, "I cannot handle this relationship as it stands anymore. I need to not see you. I need us to find other places, other people, to be around."

And you need to be prepared to let go of maybe a couple other friendships in that friendship circle, because you can't force someone to be your friend, and if you break up with one of your friends, your other friends might not wanna break up with them, so they will continue to invite them to things, or hang out with them at different points. And if you do not want to be with that person, you won't be able to go to those things.

Travis: And I would also... once again, not negating anyone's feelings. If you need to stop spending time with someone, I trust your judgment on that. But I also think it's very important in any relationship, be it romantic, be it familial, be it friendship, whatever. Um, communication is very important. And, like, is there something that this person is *doing* that they could maybe stop doing if you communicated to them...

Like, I—one of my best friends who I love so much, my friend Bradbury, like, one day said, like, "Hey—" and this is when I was, like, 23, 24. He was like, "Your first impulse when you meet someone is to kind of, like, make jokes about 'em and kind of pick on 'em a little bit, and I know you're trying to be friendly, but it makes you seem like a jerk."

And, like, it changed my behavior, right? Because, like, here is this thing that people—like, I didn't people to think I was a jerk. I had no idea! I thought we were all just, like, you know, playfully ribbin' each other, and it opened my eyes, and I have been working since then to change that behavior.

And I'm not saying that it's anybody's responsibility to, like, take on the emotional labor of fixed someone, but if the relationship is worth it to you, maybe consider saying something before you don't—that also then provides a, like, "Hey, I've talked to you about this before and it hasn't changed. I just think we need to spend some time apart." You know?

Teresa: Yep.

Travis: Um... this is from, uh, Big Duck Energy. Such—so good.

"How do you handle things when the breakup was between two people you are friends with?"

Teresa: I think that we're comin' around full circle, here. Um, I think that it may be time—the best thing that I would want would be to spend time with them separately, and if you don't want to take sides, spend time with each of them separately. Really let them know that you're still friends, even though things didn't work out, and, I mean, you might have to see movies twice. [through laughter] Who knows. [laughs]

Travis: And I also think it's tricky in this situation, 'cause it's so easy when you are mutual to become a sounding board of, like, "And *another* thing about that person—" 'cause you both know them. And I think in that circumstance, say something like, "I don't wanna make our time together about them. I wanna make it about us. Tell me what *you* need. How are *you*?"

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Like, don't—don't let them position you in between. If you want to spend time with these people—and if they can't not do that, I also think it's okay to say, like, "Listen. I love both of you. You are both my friends. If I can't be friends with both of you, then I need to step away until you're ready, like, for me to be friends with both of you."

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Don't—don't let them make you take a side. That's unfair to you.

Teresa: Agreed.

Travis: Uh, one last question, here. This is from Allie.

"How long after someone's breakup should you wait to ask them out?"

Teresa: Hmm... I don't know if it has to do with really a *time* thing. I think you have to sense—you have to find out if they are ready to move on. Um, like you said, Travis, the idea of, like, re-contextualizing how you feel around people has to do with also re-contextualizing how you feel about romantic relationships.

Travis: Yeah. I—I also think it's *very* important that you—[emphatically] Don't do this: don't become friends and comfort that person with the intention of, "I am gonna make them fall in love with me now that they're single." That's *bad*. I think if you want to date this person, and you—especially if you already have some kind of relationship with them, I think it is okay to make your intention known and say, "I don't want to step on any toes, and I don't want to rush you into anything that you're not ready for, but I would like to ask you out when you are ready." Right?

And then they know how you feel, and if they are interested and if they are ready, they will let you know. But I think doin' the, like, "I'm gonna get close to them, and then wait for my opportunity to strike!" No, no, no, no, no, no. That's bad. That's—because then you are—

Teresa: That feels like a romantic comedy, doesn't it?

Travis: Right, but it's that false pretenses! No, no, no, no. And listen, I say this because younger Travis totally would've done it. But as I've mentioned previously in this episode, young Travis? Kind of a jerk!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: So don't do it! You know, I think this is one of those things of, like, rather than—because that's another—you know, we talk about romantic comedy. Like, "the signal," you'll know? No, no, no, no.

Teresa: No, doesn't exist.

Travis: Communication. Say, like, "Hey, I know you're going through a breakup right now and I don't wanna rush you, but I feel—I have feelings for you, and I would like to ask you out, and I'm here when you're ready." That's it! And then don't keep pressuring them. No pressure in general. Pressure is bad.

Um, so that's gonna do it for us. Um, we mentioned at the beginning, research person: we want to say a special thank you to Alex, who helped us research this episode. We wanna say a special thank you to all of our donors, all Max Fun donors whether you support *Shmanners* or not, but I have to assume, if you're hearing my voice right now—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —hopefully you are both—you are a donor who supports Maxi—you get it.

Teresa: Or you soon will be!

Travis: Or you soon will be, by going to MaximumFun.org/donate. And I wanna remind you again that our sister show, *Sawbones*, is doing an episode about Broken Heart Disease, which is an excellent pairing. This is the dark chocolate and red wine pairing of Max Fun Drive, so make sure you go check that out.

Um... thank you—I don't know. What else do we say?

Teresa: We always thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. We like to thank Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art. You can find us on Twitter @shmannerstcast.

We like to thank Keely Weis Photography for taking a beautiful photograph of us that we use as the cover for our fan-run Facebook group, *Shmanners* Fanners! Go ahead and join that group if you like to give and get excellent advice from other Shmannerly listeners.

Travis: Uh, and I think we're gonna—that's gonna do it for us! Uhh... MaximumFun.org/donate! And... w—join us again next time!

Teresa: [laughs] No RSVP required!

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

Teresa: Manners, *Shmanners*. Get it?

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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