

## Shmanners 139: Matchmaking

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**Travis:** I know you've been looking for a podcast, and I think I found the perfect one for you.

**Teresa:** Ooh, what's it called?

**Travis:** 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:** Doin' good! Doin' good.

**Travis:** What's up?

**Teresa:** Well, um—

**Travis:** We never talk anymore except when we're sittin' down at the microphones. That's not true. We talk every day.

**Teresa:** We—we do talk a lot.

**Travis:** At least once.

**Teresa:** You—you talk a lot.

**Travis:** Whoa! You talk too! We have—ener—en—exchanges! We have... *full* conversations. [pauses] I can hear Bebe in the other room.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** She's talking. She's—there's somebody with her. We're not just, like—

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** —okay.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** So... what's shakin', bacon? What's up?

**Teresa:** I had a donut for breakfast. That was yummy.

**Travis:** [gasps] You did?

**Teresa:** Yeah!

**Travis:** What kind of donut? Tell me all about it.

**Teresa:** It's called a clunker. And I—

**Travis:** A clunker?

**Teresa:** —I figured out why it's weird.

**Travis:** Why?

**Teresa:** But it's good. It's weird and good.

**Travis:** Why?

**Teresa:** Uh, the—the donut salesperson said that it is a mix between a cake batter and a yeasted batter, so that's why it's a clunker, 'cause it doesn't quite really rise like a yeast does, but it also doesn't quite taste like a cake? Anyway, it's really good.

**Travis:** This episode's all about donuts.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Okay. So, add that to the list. Now we have to do an episode about donuts, and an episode about speech and debate.

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Travis:** Um, but this episode's—

**Teresa:** I'm making a mental list.

**Travis:** Okay. Um, this episode—

**Teresa:** [simultaneously] Like *The Mentalist*.

**Travis:** Did you say something about being a mentalist?

**Teresa:** [laughs] I said I'm making a mental list, like *The Mentalist*.

**Travis:** I'm so proud of you!

**Teresa:** [holding back laughter] That's what—that's what he does, right?

**Travis:** Yeah! That's it.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** The whole—the whole show is just about the guy goin', "Oh. Now I gotta remember to get that."

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Um—[clears throat] that was a good joke! I like that joke. That was a joke I would make.

**Teresa:** [through laughter] Thanks.

**Travis:** I've been—we spend too much time together. So, this episode... speaking of spending time together...

**Teresa:** Yeah!

**Travis:** ... is about *matchmaking*!

**Teresa:** It is.

**Travis:** Um, now this is an interesting one. Like, the thought—like, the episode subject occurred to me. Then I immediately thought, like, "Wait. Is this still a thing?" Because—well, one, this will surprise absolutely no one, but Teresa and I have not been in the, like, dating world for... I don't know. When—we've been together, what? Nine years?

**Teresa:** Yeah. Like a decade.

**Travis:** Yeah, basically a decade. So—but I assume... that there will always be... some form of this, right?

**Teresa:** Right. Well, so—um... long before matchmaking apps and websites, you know, like eHarmony and... Tinder? [laughs]

**Travis:** Farmers Only.

**Teresa:** Things like that.

**Travis:** Is Farmers—hey. Everyone listening, is Farmers Only real, or is that just—

**Teresa:** I have no idea.

**Travis:** —like, I know I've seen an ad for it. But it only seems like a thing people reference when making a joke about dating websites—or maybe that's just a McElroy thing. I don't know.

**Teresa:** I don't know. I don't know. But long before that, it was a profession! And a very culturally respected profession, because it seems that... when—when people were getting married and—and we've talked about how marriage used to be more like... you know, 75—

**Travis:** Political?

**Teresa:** —75 percent, uh, business, right?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Um, when people were doing that... people were young, you know? You didn't get out much. There wasn't—there wasn't the world wide web. You know? You couldn't—information didn't travel very far, so when you were looking for a life partner to be with you, you know, both in a loving relationship and a business relationship, you—

**Travis:** But 75 percent the one, yeah.

**Teresa:** 75 percent. Um, you needed help! You know? And people were young, and idealistic, I suppose.

**Travis:** Everyone was young! It was so much bet—I also assume that there was a lot of, like... you—like, family—because, like we keep saying, it's like a business thing, right? So you would want a negotiator?

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Right? You would want—

**Teresa:** Kind of a middleman?

**Travis:** —yeah. You would want somebody who—

**Teresa:** Middleperson.

**Travis:** —like, a fac—a facilitator, you know? Somebody who was like, "Okay, cool." The—the thing I keep thinking of is, like, the families in *Corpse Bride*, you know? Where, like, the one's new money and the one's more established, but they're broke?

**Teresa:** Yeah!

**Travis:** Where it's like, they would be, like, butting heads a lot, you know what I mean? So you'd want some kind of facilitator who's like, "Let me arrange everything."

**Teresa:** Sure. And you know, you want someone who has kind of a—a wide breadth of knowledge, so that they can, like, kind of jigsaw people who they think will fit well together? Um—

**Travis:** And you mean their—like, especially socially.

**Teresa:** Especially socially.

**Travis:** Where it's like, you know these eight people and you know these twelve people, and, like, within that there's four people that overlap, so you probably have connections there. And, like, it would make sense—like, I—I sometimes think about—especially when we discuss stuff like this on the show—the politics that went into the social aspects of this. Of, like, "Well, but I can't have *this* family dating someone from *this* family, or *these* three families would be upset that they—" you know what I mean? Like—

**Teresa:** Sure, sure.

**Travis:** I can't even imagine the—the—the depth of knowledge you would have to have in gossip to be able to do this.

**Teresa:** Well, and I think that—like you mentioned, *Corpse Bride* takes place in—in a Victorian-esque society. Um—

**Travis:** We're recording this near Halloween. I don't know if that's clear?

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** We only have, like, eight family-appropriate Halloween movies that Bebe likes to watch, and one of 'em is *Corpse Bride*. She likes *Corpse Bride*. She likes when the skeletons dance.

**Teresa:** Yeah, she does.

**Travis:** She enjoys that part a lot.

**Teresa:** Um, but matchmaking as, like, a cultural profession, is as old as the Ancient Greeks, and the Aztecs, the Chinese—every—everybody had this kind of, you know, person in their social structure, because it—it was necessary. You know? [holding back laughter] I—from—from the idea that young people can't be trusted to—to do what's best for themselves.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** And from, like you said, the complicated social strata. Um, somebody had to be in charge of this kind of thing.

**Travis:** [sarcastically] Yeah! Just look at *Romeo and Juliet*. Two young people makin' decisions of themselves.

**Teresa:** I know.

**Travis:** Look how that turns out. You know what I mean?

**Teresa:** Sure did.

**Travis:** Ugh. Is that—I don't think that's supposed to be the takeaway from *Romeo and Juliet*, though, is it? [laughs] "Young people! Ugh!"

**Teresa:** [laughs] It's—it's—it's one of the surrounding themes, I think.

**Travis:** Yeah? That's what we're supposed to take away? Like, *Romeo and Juliet* is the Tide Pods of its day? Like, "Aw, young people. They're always makin' bad decisions."

**Teresa:** Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, several—

**Travis:** "Take the *Romeo and Juliet* challenge!"

**Teresa:** [laughs] Several of these, uh, cultural epicenters of society even, you know, are very popular today. And I read as much as 60 percent of marriages throughout the world are arranged.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Um, either by families or by a matchmaker. Um, so a very popular social kind of—you know, our—one of our popular culture people is you think of when you think of a matchmaker, you think of—

**Travis:** [singing] Matchmaker, matchmaker—

**Teresa:** That's right!

**Travis:** [singing] —make me a match! Find a find! Catch me a catch!

[pauses]

From—is that from *Fiddler*?

**Teresa:** Yes, it is!

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um—

**Travis:** *Fiddler on the Roof*.

**Teresa:** *Fiddler on the Roof*. And... one of the things that has kind of permeated our society in the character in that show—

**Travis:** Yentl. Yen—

**Teresa:** —Yen—Yente.

**Travis:** Yente.

**Teresa:** Um, and I would say that in popular cultural, people call a matchmaker a yenta, but that's not really what that word means. What that word means is—is the—

**Travis:** And Yen—wait, *Yentl* is the Barbara Streisand movie?

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Travis:** Is that about matchmakers? No.

**Teresa:** I don't know. I haven't seen it.



**Travis:** I've never seen it either. Oh no! Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, but that word is a Yiddish word more about the—I guess the personality of an older person? So someone, like you said, very well-connected. The social status, um, and also maybe a little bit of a gossip? Although that can be good or bad.

**Travis:** And that could also just be—everyone in a small town is a gossip, you know what I mean?

**Teresa:** Certainly.

**Travis:** Can we also talk about—I know that this isn't germane to the topic, but also in *Fiddler on the Roof* there's a character named Lazar Wolf [pronounces it like "Laser Wolf"], and it's still to my—to this day is one of my favorite names ever?

It's the guy who's supposed to marry one of the daughters, but instead—I think it's, like, the young baker or something, marries her. But the character's name is *Lazar Wolf*.

**Teresa:** I'm certain that the pronunciation is different from what you're saying.

**Travis:** It's Lazar Wolf! [through laughter] His name is Lazar Wolf! I don't know how I could be saying—hold on.

**Teresa:** I—I bet if you said it in—in an accent that is, uh, appropriate for *Fiddler on the Roof*, it might sound different.

**Travis:** L-A-Z-A-R W-O-L-F. Lazar Wolf. [pauses] I'm say—I'm tell—okay.

**Teresa:** I believe you, but what I'm saying is—certainly it's spelled that way, but I don't think you're pronouncing it the way it's intended to be pronounced.

**Travis:** I—listen. You might be right, but you can't take Lazar Wolf away from me.

**Teresa:** [laughs] Okay. Well, the real name for a, uh... a—

**Travis:** Matchmaker.

**Teresa:** —a matchmaker in the Jewish community is shadchan.

**Travis:** Okay. I can see why... people might default to yenta... instead.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** As, like—I mean, the—the—the—I assume this is Yiddish, yeah?

**Teresa:** Uh, that is Hebrew.

**Travis:** Hebrew. The non-Hebrew speaker would maybe have an easier time with yenta.

**Teresa:** Yes. Yen—and Yente is the Yiddish.

**Travis:** Ahh.

**Teresa:** Um, is a Yiddish name.

**Travis:** Gotcha, gotcha, gotcha.

**Teresa:** Not the Yiddish for matchmaker.

**Travis:** Gotcha.

**Teresa:** Anyway. Um, and this goes back all the way to Genesis. Um, so—

**Travis:** Phil Collins?!

**Teresa:** [groans]

**Travis:** Hahhh.

**Teresa:** So, um, the servant of Abraham is selecting a bride for Abraham's son by watching these women behave around a well. And Rebecca—

**Travis:** And that was the first "Well, actually."

**Teresa:** —is the only one to pass what the—what biblical scholars now call the Camel Test. So she offers water to, um... Eliez—Eliezer—Eliezer, maybe. Um,

offers water to both him and all his camels from the well. Um, and that's pretty generous of her, especially with her time, [holding back laughter] because there were ten camels.

**Travis:** That's a lot of camels.

**Teresa:** That's a lot of camels.

**Travis:** And you know what? Still, to this day, if you're looking for someone to marry, it's a good way to go. See if they offer water to camels. You know what I mean?

**Teresa:** Yeah!

**Travis:** And then... may—I don't know. Maybe horses? And then...

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** ...donkeys? And then ponies.

**Teresa:** And then cows.

**Travis:** And then cows. And then mar—

**Teresa:** And goats.

**Travis:** —and then you marry 'em.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** Right there and then.

**Teresa:** Another name for a matchmaker in Ancient Greece was... *promnestria*, as they were called. And basically they were, like you said, the negotiators. And they even collected some of the dowry fee.

**Travis:** Huh.

**Teresa:** Yeah. The same thing is true today in, um, small Irish towns. Um, there's a specific Irish town that is *very* famous for this kind of, like... matchmaker

society? It's, uh, in a spa town where people have flocked to bathe and drink in spa waters, called Lin—Lisdoonvarna.

**Travis:** Nice.

**Teresa:** Lus—Li—Lisdoonvarna. There it is.

**Travis:** Perfect.

**Teresa:** Lisdoonvarna. Um, and this, like I said, is where, uh, the traditional matchmakers are Irish working-class men, tradesmen, um, because they pretty much, you know, do business with everyone in town. They know everyone's, you know, kids and they see everyone in town on a regular basis, so they have pretty good knowledge as to who's ready to get married, ready to settle down.

Um, and, like I said, they earn part of the dowry with a successful match!

**Travis:** There is a matchmaker scene in *Mulan*, right? I'm not making that up.

**Teresa:** Yes. There is. Um, that is...

**Travis:** Is that—is she a matchmaker? Or is she just, like... bride trainer?

**Teresa:** No, she's totally a matchmaker. And, um, the process of... omiai.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, so there's the matchmaker in there, and she is called a nakado.

**Travis:** Okay. And that—[stammering]—

**Teresa:** Or no—na-ko-da—do. Nakodo. That's a—a long over the O.

**Travis:** And it's—it's a—like, that—but that it is, like, combination bride training and... matchmaking, right? I—

**Teresa:** In the movie—

**Travis:** —I'm just picturing the scene, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Teresa:** In the movie, I suppose it is. Um, but what—again, it's still in use today. Uh, this is the person who sets up the meetings and, you know, almost sends pictures and resumes?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Do you remember, um—there's another movie that has a matchmaker in it. *Penelope*? I made you watch that, right?

**Travis:** Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Teresa:** Yeah! And I, at first—

**Travis:** With Christina Ricci?

**Teresa:** That's right!

**Travis:** I remember.

**Teresa:** At first I saw that movie and I was like, "Well, that's kind of weird. It's almost like a job application." But—but it is! It is, kind of, and you can see the—the matchmaker character. She has files of suitors, and you know, their pictures, and almost resumes and stuff. It's very interesting.

**Travis:** I'm gonna ask you what may be a tricky question. How do you feel about it?

**Teresa:** [clicks tongue]

**Travis:** All this matchmaking and—kind of as a very organized, business-y type thing?

**Teresa:** Well... I feel... that... I think that it's a good way... it's a good way to meet people? Uh, to have someone kind of set you up, as long as the matchmaker doesn't... get offended if it's not the right person.

**Travis:** Yeah. That—I've been sitting here thinking about it, and it kind of feels like if everyone's on board with it...

**Teresa:** Mm-hm?

**Travis:** ...I think it's great. Because that's the thing is, I was also thinking about—throughout my life, like, trying to think of other, like—of—of times when I feel like I witnessed firsthand, like, matchmaking happening. And I feel like there was a lot of that, like, growing up in Southern Baptist Church. Where it was like, "We'll get all the kids together and have 'em hang out!" And it wasn't necessarily, like, "Your daughter, my son, let's do this."

But it was much more of, like, mixers? And, like—

**Teresa:** Sure, yeah.

**Travis:** —singles things? Um, and I'm also remembering, like, you know, middle school and high school. Of, like... "My friend thinks you're cute. Like, you guys should go out on a date." Right?

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** And as long as everyone's cool with that—I think we've talked before about, like, dating and how to meet people.

**Teresa:** Absolutely.

**Travis:** And one of the best ways I know to meet people is, like, friends of friends, and that kind of thing. And, like, I don't know. It feels like... I—one thing. Like, I don't judge other cultures for this, because, like, the way you do it—if it works, it works. Right? But I do feel like what I'm used to culturally is a much looser structure of this that still—like, we talk about dating websites.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** That's matchmaking!

**Teresa:** Totally is.

**Travis:** Right? We talk about, like, you know, friends of friends. Like, "Hey! Would your friend Debra—she seems great. Is she single?"

That's matchmaking! You know what I mean?

**Teresa:** Yeah, totally.

**Travis:** But I also do think—and we'll talk more about this when we get to the audience questions—there's also a form of this, of the, like, kind of surprise matchmaking?

**Teresa:** Oh, yeah.

**Travis:** That I *do not* care for.

**Teresa:** Do not care for.

**Travis:** Um, and in fact, I mentioned audience questions, and we should get to those, but first... how about a thank you note to our sponsors?

**Teresa:** Certainly.

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[theme music plays]

**Teresa:** *Shmanners* is sponsored in part this week by Sun Basket! You can fuel your body and nourish it without having to do a ton of work with the easy-to-prepare meal kit delivery from Sun Basket!

Um, Sun Basket is a great service for us in a couple ways. I really love how the portions are very well portioned. Uh, we hardly ever have leftovers, just for two people. Um, and they all come—all of the meal kits—

**Travis:** Well, you say two people. But at this point, we're two and a half.

**Teresa:** Two and a half.

**Travis:** I mean, Bebe eats what we eat, you know?

**Teresa:** That's true. That's true. Um, the way that they package the meals, uh, it all comes in one bag. You just—each meal, and you just toss it in the fridge and pull it out when you're ready for it. Um, and the produce is really great. It's fresh. Uh, they have some organic produce as well.

**Travis:** And it introduces you to new things. Like, we just had a—

**Teresa:** Yeah!

**Travis:** —a meal with beef skewers, but also in there was Asian pears. Which, I mean, is not something—

**Teresa:** Mmm. They were delicious!

**Travis:** —yeah, it's not something I would think about buying when I was at the store. And Bebe, like, loved them!

**Teresa:** Loved them. Um, they have lots of options to try new things. You can try paleo or gluten-free or lean and clean or vegan, and they even have diabetes-friendly. They have family-friendly options. Um, we have—we have some in the fridge right now!

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** We enjoy it.

**Travis:** Like I said, just did beef skewers... last night? Night before last?

**Teresa:** Yep, mm-hm.

**Travis:** It was really good!

**Teresa:** So I—

**Travis:** And I will also say, super easy.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** Like, it was a good, tasty, healthy meal that took me about 15 minutes to make. It was great.

**Teresa:** It was great. Our listeners can get \$35 off their first order at [sunbasket.com/shmanners](https://sunbasket.com/shmanners). That's [sunbasket.com/shmanners](https://sunbasket.com/shmanners) for \$35 off. One more time: [sunbasket.com/shmanners](https://sunbasket.com/shmanners).

**Travis:** I also wanna tell you about CanvasPeople, which is not, as I originally thought, about, like, paintings that come to life or, like—

**Teresa:** [laughs]



**Travis:** —I don't know. Some kind of, like, scarecrow made out of canvas. No.

**Teresa:** We should run that by them.

**Travis:** That they should... have paintings that come to life?

**Teresa:** Yeah! I'd like that.

**Travis:** Like in Harry Potter?

**Teresa:** Yeah!

**Travis:** I think about that all the time, by the way. Now that there's, like, live photos that you can take with your phone where you hold them and then move. I'm like, "[whispering] That's Harry Potter! Oh my goodness!"

Okay. So... here's the thing. Maybe you're looking for... I don't know. A meaningful gift for a significant other, or you wanna get, like—for right now we have, you know, our beautiful daughter. And grandparents always want something to kind of capture that moment.

Well, here's the thing. CanvasPeople prints your favorite memories on canvas, and turns them into unique works of art that add a beautiful touch to your home. With CanvasPeople, you get your favorite memories printed to cherish, and beautiful prints that look great on any wall. Listen—

**Teresa:** I think that you can even get the kind where it, like, wraps around, like a—like real art. [laughs] You know what I mean?

**Travis:** Yeah!

**Teresa:** In a museum!

**Travis:** I mean, listen. Old stuff? Print out your photos, put 'em in a frame. Right? That new hotness? Go to CanvasPeople, have it turned into a work of art. Maybe you want a picture of your dog. Like, this is something we would definitely do for Buttercup, or we would do for Willow—or, if I'm being honest, I would do for myself. That I would have a picture of me hanging in my office.

Teresa's looking around at walls right now, where there are—there—I'm looking at a picture of me right there.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** I would do this! So, as a special, very limited holiday offer, canvaspeople.com is offering their popular 11 by 14 photo canvases for free! That's right, free! These normally sell for 69.99, but for this week only, you'll pay nothing! Just cover shipping and handling. To get your free canvas, text "shmanners" to 797979. That's S-H-M-A-N-N-E-R-S, 797979. Just pay shipping and handling! This offer won't last long, so text "shmanners" to 797979. That's "shmanners—"

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** —to 797979. Message and data rates may apply.

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[dramatic music plays]

**Freddie:** [movie trailer voice over voice] Since the dawn of time, screenwriters have taken months to craft their stories! But now, three Hollywood professionals shall attempt the impossible: break a story in one hour.

[normal voice] That's right. Here on *Story Break*, I, Freddie Wong—

**Matt:** Matt Arnold—

**Will:** —and Will Campos—

**Freddie:** —the creators behind award-winning shows like *Video Game High School*—

**Matt:** Have one hour to turn a humble idea into an awesome movie.

**Will:** Now, an awesome movie starts with an awesome title.

**Matt:** I chose *The Billionaire's Marriage Valley*.

**Freddie:** [holding back laughter] Mine was *Christmas Pregnant Paradise*.

**All:** [wheezy laughter]

**Matt:** Okay. Next, we need a protagonist.

**Will:** So, I've heard Wario best described as libertarian Mario?

**Matt:** [laughs]

**Freddie:** And of course, every great movie needs a stellar pitch.

**Matt:** In order to get to heaven, sometimes you gotta raise a little hell.

**Will:** [laughs loudly] That's the tagline!

**Freddie:** Check out *Story Break* every week on Maximumfun.org, or whatever you get your podcasts!

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**Travis:** Alright. Let's do... some questions. First—this isn't a question, actually—

**Teresa:** Oh, okay.

**Travis:** —but this is from Mary. And Mary said:

"Not a question, but a story, because I can't even believe it really happened. In high school, we had matchmaker week, where everyone answered a survey, and then as a fundraiser we could buy our results: a list of 20 student matches, and our percentage compatible. We did this in school."

Mary, I did that too. I don't think it was high school. I think maybe it was, like, middle school?

**Teresa:** Well, this something that has been around since the 1920's.

**Travis:** Really?!

**Teresa:** Yeah! This kind of, like, scientific approach. It's what, um—what eHarmony does. It's what—

**Travis:** I mean, I guess that's true.

**Teresa:** —I mean, it's basically just a survey. And if you hit the same, you know, multiple choice question, then you're, quote, "matched up." It's—it's not a difficult thing to do.

**Travis:** I don't think that this was done, though—'cause I'm seeming to remember it as being either elementary school or middle school, and I don't think it was framed for us as, like, a romantic matchmaking so much as it was just, like, a friendship compatibility test, or something like that.

**Teresa:** I think that's how it was framed for us as well. I do recall taking something like this in my science class. Um, because we were talking about how, you know, compatibility and probability and matching and all this kind of stuff works.

**Travis:** But I think that that's—listen, folks. I'm sorry, but I think it's garbage.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** And I'll tell you why. Listen, Teresa and I—there's many things that, like, we agree on and that we're similar on. But, like, there's also equally as many things that we are different. Like, we were just yesterday talking about our

supermarket shopping styles, and how completely different they are. And, like, we wouldn't have matched up as compatible answering questions about that. I just think—I don't know.

There's a certain part of, like, compatibility testing where I'm like, I get that. If it's, like, I guess super scientific where it's like... matching two puzzle pieces. But if you just pick up two identical puzzle pieces, they don't go together!

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** That's not how puzzle pieces work! Okay. This is from Yackley.

"How do I politely turn down my well-meaning friends who want to set me up on a date?"

**Teresa:** Um, I think that this goes back to, like, the relationship that you have with your friends and where you cultivate, like, an honest and open discussion. And I—you might want to try and see—to get to the bottom of why they want to set you up.

Um, because I'm certain that they care for you. Um, and so if they want to set you up, maybe they think that this would help you in some way. Um, and if that's not the kind of help you want, you should talk to them about it.

**Travis:** Yeah. And you know what? I also would say... not to not answer your question, but maybe part of it too is, like, rather than saying 100 percent no, saying, like, "Hey, I want you to—like, just stop bringing every single idea to me you have. Bring me your best ones, and we'll see."

**Teresa:** Yeah, let's filter these ideas.

**Travis:** Yeah. Let's filter it down a little bit, and, like, then we'll talk? But right now, you meet—like, make a new friend or, like, see somebody at the park and you're like, "This person!"

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** "The person with the blue coat!"

"What's their name?"

"I don't even know yet!"

Like, okay. Well, maybe... maybe we narrow that down a little bit, friend.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Um... a—a—speaking of different sides of a coin, alternate takes, Melissa asks:

"How do I ask my friends to set me up without seeming or feeling awkward or desperate?"

**Teresa:** Um, I don't think that any of this comes across as desperate.

**Travis:** No. People *love* setting people up.

**Teresa:** [laughs] They do—it is something that is quite fun. [laughs] Um... But I think that—well, first of all, make sure that your friends have a relationship with that person. Um, because it would be—it would be very out of their way for them to have a relationship with the person you want to be set up with, and then have to... set them up—

**Travis:** "Hey, become friends with that person, and then set me up with them!"

**Teresa:** [laughs] Exactly. Exactly. So make sure that they have a relationship like that. Um, and then—I—I don't know... we've talked about this before. It is not impolite or—you shouldn't feel awkward about, um, stating your needs, and asking for things that you want. Um, because the worst that your friends could say is no.

**Travis:** Yeah. I—I think also, uh, lower the threshold a little bit. And rather than saying, "Hey, set me up on a date with this person," say, like, "Hey, I think that that person is interesting. Could we arrange, like, something where we will be in the same place so I can get to know them better, and they can get to know me?"

**Teresa:** Even—even if, like, in a different way, maybe provide the situation already. Say, "I'm having a board game night. That person that we met at... karaoke was really awesome."

**Travis:** "That you knew," yeah. "Bring them."

**Teresa:** "Bring them with you."

**Travis:** Right. Because I think that that's a lot easier than saying, "Hey, set me up on a date with that person."

**Teresa:** Yeah. "Do all the work, please."

**Travis:** Yeah. That—I think that's a little much of a burden to put on your friends.

**Teresa:** I wouldn't say a burden. I would say it's a large ask.

**Travis:** Okay. Well, we can use synonyms all day long. That's fine. Um... [quietly] burden.

Um, so this question comes from Jennifer.

"Sometimes a well-intentioned person may 'trick' another into a date, such as arranging friends to meet in a romantic setting and not telling one or both of the plan. If you find yourself trapped in this situation, is there a way to bow out gracefully without hurting the other party?"

Oh, man. There are times like this where [emphatically] I don't miss being single at all!

**Teresa:** This—I—

**Travis:** There's—I should be clear. I never miss being single. [laughs quietly]

**Teresa:** I actually can't believe that this is something that happens in real life. This is something that I recall seeing in movies.

**Travis:** I... I could definitely see this happening with a certain type of friend where it's like, "Yeah, all three of us are gonna hang out! Oh, you know what? I can't make it." Like, I could definitely see that happening.

I mean, here's the thing, y'all. We can sit here and talk about this all day long, but to some degree, I kind of tricked Teresa into our first date?

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** And made Griffin go along with us? And that's a bigger story that I'm sure we've told on this podcast before. But—

**Teresa:** I had an inkling that this was the case, so.

**Travis:** Yeah. So, like... I—I think that... this is—well, okay. So... one, this is definitely a "Fool me once, shame on you," kind of deal. Of, like, if you have a friend who does this to you once and then says, like, "Yeah! Hey! We're all gonna—" and you're like, "Uhh... hold on. Are you doing this? Like, tell me what's up. Let—"

And I think the other thing you do is—once again, I think if you find yourself in this scenario, I think you say to the other person in the scenario with you... like, "Hey. I think our friend is trying to set us up on a date. Um, I don't know how you feel about that, but I'm a little uncomfortable with it. Um, so, you know, maybe we could just... like, grab coffee, and then go separate ways, or whatever."

I think that there's something to be said about giving it a chance, unless it absolutely is nothing, and feels weird, and you're uncomfortable.

**Teresa:** Yeah. Unless you are completely unprepared.

**Travis:** Yeah. Listen, if you're uncomfortable in a scenario—and especially, especially, like, a deep discomfort—and I don't just mean, like, "Oh, this is awkward." To, like, "I don't want—like, I need to get out of here."

**Teresa:** You can!

**Travis:** You don't need to make any excuses. You can dip. I think that if it's like—

**Teresa:** Yeah. I think that you can say, "This isn't the—this isn't what I thought was gonna happen. I need to go."

**Travis:** Yeah. State your needs—

**Teresa:** That's it!



**Travis:** —say the deal. And because it's—it's kind of you to worry about hurting the other party, but sometimes part of being polite, part of manners, is saying what you're honestly feeling rather than, like, dancing around and trying to cover up.

Because here's the thing. At this point, the person who has done something wrong is neither you nor the other person in the scenario with you. It's the person who has tricked you both into this scenario.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** And even if this is a thing where—like, let's say A, B, and C, right? A and C are on the date, and B arranged it. Even if, like, B and C were working together, A is still completely in the right to say, like, "I don't wanna be here. I'm sorry. This isn't what I thought it was going to be. Um, thank you very much, and have a great night."

And then leave.

**Teresa:** Yep!

**Travis:** And then go to B and be like, "Yo! What was that?"

**Teresa:** "Yeah, don't do that." [laughs]

**Travis:** "Don't—don't do that anymore."

'Cause that's the thing. What really frustrates me about that kind of scenario, if— if someone does something like this, is potentially A and C might have hit it off it was done right.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** But trying to force that together.. it's like chemistry! You know what I mean? Like... there's a certain way to mix chemicals so that they don't explode. You know what I mean?

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** And that extends... that's the end of my chemistry knowledge.

Um, so, this question comes from Katie.

"One of my friends has a crush on my sister and is planning to ask her out soon. However, I know my sister doesn't like him back and will probably say no. Should I just tell him not to ask her, or should I let things play out?"

**Teresa:** [sighs] This is tough. Um... because if... [sighs] [pauses]

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Yeah. Because if you—if you warn the asker.. that could backfire into—the i—like, maybe they'll double down. Or maybe they will... I don't know. [sighs] This is hard!

**Travis:** Here's—here's—

**Teresa:** What do you think? What do you think?

**Travis:** —yeah, here's the tricky thing, right? There's no way to go to your friend and say this... in a convincing way, without saying "I spoke to my sister. If you ask her out, she will say no."

At which point I think even though you are embar—like, avoiding the embarrassing situation, you have now added a different embarrassing situation in which you have already spoken about this person to your sister. And I think that that will end up just making them maybe a little mad at you. I—

**Teresa:** So maybe the best thing is to let it play out, and just be prepared to comfort and mend, right? When they're rejected. I think that might be a better idea, uh, to have some sort of, you know, fun activity planned afterwards, or even—even if it's just some time to—to let them kind of unwind a little bit with you.

**Travis:** I think that this is one of those cases where we really need to make clear and say explicitly, like, when we give answers to questions like this, we are not telling you, like, "This is the path. Do this."

Right now especially, we're saying, like, "This is what we would do." Because that is what Teresa would do. What I would do is to go to this person and say, "I don't think this is a good idea. Um, and I'm not being careful. I just—I don't know that you are her type, or that, you know, she would say yes."

Don't say—

**Teresa:** So maybe what you would say was—you would go through kind of, like, their incompatibility, or you would talk about the reasons maybe, uh, for example, the sister would say no. Maybe their, you know, political ideas are different.

**Travis:** Whatever.

**Teresa:** Or whatever.

**Travis:** But what you don't wanna do, Katie, is say something like, "You know, she's just not really looking to date right now." Or—'cause there's all of these dodges that people say.

**Teresa:** Right. That "He's not really into you" type—

**Travis:** Right. And the problem is—

**Teresa:** —idea, and I'm making air quotes.

**Travis:** —the problem is is if you say something like, "They're not really interested in dating right now." Right? And then two weeks later your sister starts dating someone—

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** —or something. I think it's okay to say, like, "Listen. Trust me. I know my sister. I don't think it's a good idea for you to ask her out."

And I—I also don't think you would be out of line to say, like, "You are my friend, and I don't want to lose you as a friend if it doesn't work out, you know? If you ask my sister and she says no, I feel like that would put a strain on our relationship."

You know what I mean? Something like that.

**Teresa:** Yeah. And then what I would do is, like I said, I would be just ready to catch and cradle.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** I think.

**Travis:** And—and you know what? Also, at a certain point, though—and this is a good lesson to take away when it comes to, like, this kind of casual friend matchmaking deal. Um, as we often say on the show, all you can do is all you can do.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** And this is, like, you know, you can tell your friend, like, "I don't think it's a good idea."

But then... people get to make their own decisions. And, you know, they're gonna do what they're gonna do. And it's the same as, like, if you have two friends that you think are absolutely perfect and they don't want to meet, or they do meet and don't hit it off... yeah. That happens. Like, that's—it's called free will!

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** And that's what's up! You know? Uh, so that's gonna do it for us this week. Thank you so much for joining us. First, I want to say thank you to Maximumfun.org. Go check out all the other amazing Maximum Fun shows.

Um, I also want to say thank you to Brent "brentalfloss" Black—

**Teresa:** Hey!

**Travis:** —for our intro and outro music. I remembered! Um, we have a McElroy newsletter the we're working on. You can go to [bit.ly/mcelroymail](http://bit.ly/mcelroymail). Um, also, go check out all of our super cool merch at [mcelroymerch.com](http://mcelroymerch.com), including a beautiful *Shmanners* shirt designed by Kate Leth, and, like, a "Hello, my dove," "Hello, dear," pin set, also designed by Kate Leth, that I think are... super cute.

Um, what else, Teresa? I already—I stole your Brent thing.

**Teresa:** Yep, yep. Um, thank you to Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art. Thank you to Keely Weis Photography for the cover banner of our fan-run Facebook group. Go and join that group. There's some really great, uh, fanners, givin' out and gettin' some good advice.

**Travis:** Um, and I think that's gonna do it for us, so join us again next week!

**Teresa:** No RSVP required!

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

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

[theme music plays]

\*\*\*\*\*

[chord]

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