

## Shmanners 200: Snowball Fights

Published March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020

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**Travis:** Teresa, where do snow royals dance? At the Snow Ball.

**Teresa:** [groans]

**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:** Uh, how are you?

**Teresa:** I'm—I'm doing well. Um, I think that I—I was ready to record this in my heart, yesterday.

**Travis:** Uh-huh, yeah.

**Teresa:** Because it was snowing!

**Travis:** It was snowing a little bit. We have gotten, uh—I will—I will say, uh, teased. Uh, teased—

**Teresa:** Several times.

**Travis:** —several times. We've had *some* snow. We've had enough snow—there was one night where, um, it started snowing early enough that we were able to, like, put a coat on Bebe over her pajamas and, like, boots on over her pajamas

and she could go out and play in the snow, which I'm so glad we did, because by, like, 8 AM—

**Teresa:** It was gone.

**Travis:** —it was gone.

**Teresa:** And then there was another time where it was early enough in the day that it hadn't melted yet, so I was able to get her dressed right away in, like, good snow stuff, and shove her outside. [laughs] And she did things like roll around on the ground—

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** —in the snow. Um, but it was always gone by lunch.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** It really hasn't stuck around this year.

**Travis:** Well, 'cause you—you grew up in Ohio.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** I grew up in West Virginia. Both fairly, you know, Midwestern climate. Uh, snow-friendly, I would say.

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

**Travis:** Like, I re—I had some blizzards growing up.

**Teresa:** Yes, yes.

**Travis:** Where there was, like, feet of snow.

**Teresa:** And, like, the whole week off school?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Amazing.

**Travis:** Well, and that was the thing that I loved most about being in West Virginia during the winter. So many good sledding hills.

**Teresa:** Yeah!

**Travis:** I remember, uh, I went to college in Oklahoma, at University of Oklahoma, Boomer Sooner, and—

**Teresa:** Does it—it doesn't snow there, does it?

**Travis:** Oh yeah, it snows in Oklahoma.

**Teresa:** Oh, okay.

**Travis:** But there is *no* hills.

**Teresa:** Ohh, yeah. Flat prairie lands.

**Travis:** Yeah. My freshman year, it snowed quite a bit, and I had a lot of friends from Texas who had never, like, been in snow. Like, had never been somewhere where it was, like, snowing?

**Teresa:** Oh, that's—okay. I was confused about where Oklahoma is. I was—

**Travis:** North of Texas.

**Teresa:** —north of Texas. [laughs quietly]

**Travis:** Mm-hm. And, like, there were—there was no, uh, hills to be found!

**Teresa:** Yeah. We used to, uh—so my parents' house has a, uh—has a back patio, like, deck thing, that has, like, four or five steps down to the—uh, to the yard. And we would put a piece of plywood over the steps—

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** —and then shovel all the snow from the deck onto the steps so that we made our own little, like, ramp to—to go straight down. [laughs] Down the hill of our yard into, uh, a fence? Uh, covered in raspberry bushes.

**Travis:** See, that is, uh—

**Teresa:** Um—

**Travis:** —it—and anecdotally—

**Teresa:** [muffled laughter]

**Travis:** —for our—our points of—uh, data points of two, um, that is also—I think that every sledding hill ends with, "And then, death."

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Because, like, we had—at Ritter Park, where we did most of our sledding, um, it was right by the amphitheater, and it was this kind of, like...

**Teresa:** Oh, I—I've seen that! Okay, I know what you're talking about.

**Travis:** Right? This, like, big hill that was, like, perfect, 'cause it was, like, hu—it was almost 180 degrees of hill, you know what I mean? Like, it curved around. So there was lots of room for everybody to, like, sled on.

But at the bottom of it was, like... like, bramble, bramble, bramble... creek!  
Bramble, bramble, bramble—

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** So it's like, all of it was unpleasant. So, like, you *had* to stop at the bottom. And if you didn't, end of day.

**Teresa:** Yep.

**Travis:** Uh, and that was the—I—I once [holding back laughter] sledded into the, uh, fence that ran along the side of the hill, and kind of went under the fence somehow, 'cause I was just going fast enough.

Um, but so—I will also say, now, I loved sledding. But then when I was a kid—I think I was probably about 12 that I hit the age of, like, "Oh, you know what? This is cold and it sucks."

**Teresa:** Oh, yeah.

**Travis:** Where it was like—where it was like I could maybe be outside for... hmm, 20 minutes. As soon as any wet soaked through, like, socks or gloves, I was done. Didn't wanna do it anymore. And then—

**Teresa:** Um, pause.

**Travis:** Yeah?

**Teresa:** I would like to, uh, welcome Buttercup to the studio. She's—

**Travis:** Buttercup has jumped up and kind of nestled herself—

**Teresa:** [simultaneously]—[through laughter] jumped up in my lap.

**Travis:** —and is standing awkwardly...

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** ... on Teresa's lap. Just like—

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** —"Oh, I won't be any bother!"

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Um, but then, uh, as an adult, I became frustrated by snow, because I had to, like, drive to work and stuff! And that was no fun. I didn't get to play in the snow.

**Teresa:** Yeah, you hardly ever get snow days off of work.

**Travis:** But now that I have a three-year-old, I love snow again!

**Teresa:** Yeah!

**Travis:** It's great. It's cyclical. Why are we talking about snow?

**Teresa:** Well, because we're gonna talk about snowball fights.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** In, uh... in my life, I think that I have never had a proper snowball fight.

**Travis:** Really?

**Teresa:** Not the kind that you see in, like, movies.

**Travis:** Really?

**Teresa:** Um, because it usually happens where one person throws a snowball, and that person runs away, and the person hit by the snowball runs after them trying to... hit *them* with a snowball. And that's—that's just two snowballs.

**Travis:** Well—

**Teresa:** It was one and a half, really.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** If you're talking about, like, organized, fort on one side, fort on the other, like, five-on-five kind of snow warfare...

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** ...I don't know that I've ever had that, too. But definitely me and my brothers, like, in the backyard, have thrown more than five volleys back and forth.

**Teresa:** Okay, alright. That's a proper snowball fight. I dunno why five is your magic number, but...

**Travis:** That—it just seems to me like that seems—like—but—"Ah, yes. This is—"

**Teresa:** Oh, so something that lasts, like, two minutes and then everybody's like, "Okay, I'm done." [crosstalk]—

**Travis:** Well, until you get, like, hit in the eye, or snow goes down the back of your shirt, right.

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

**Travis:** Um, let me ask you this. Do you remember—for some reason, whenever I think of snowball fights, the one Disney cartoon with Donald versus Huey, Dewey, and Louie, where they, like, have different, like, forts built up—

**Teresa:** Yeah!

**Travis:** —and Donald has, like, a pirate ship. That's what I think of every time I think of that.

**Teresa:** I've seen that. That's a good one.

**Travis:** So, how does snowball fight ha—what etiquette is there—like, no—

**Teresa:** Well, we'll—we'll definitely get to that.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** But I want—I want to, um—I wanna paint you a couple of pictures, first.

**Travis:** Paint me a word picture, Teresa.

**Teresa:** Alright. So, in—

**Travis:** Let me close my eyes. Hold on.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Let me nestle in with my hot cocoa. Okay.

**Teresa:** On January 29<sup>th</sup>, 1863, there was a massive snowball fight. Uh, Confederate troops who were stationed at the Rappahannock Valley in Northern Virginia began exchanging some friendly snowball fire, and by the end it escalated to a nine *thousand*-person brawl.

**Travis:** But all Confederate, right? It wasn't like—

**Teresa:** Yes, yes.

**Travis:** —the Union and Confederate soldiers throwin' snowballs back and— 'cause I would say, Union soldiers... [through laughter] you got better stuff to do!

**Teresa:** [amused] No, no, no.

**Travis:** [unintelligible].

**Teresa:** Just—just—just there, at the fort.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** And then, uh, in January—January 12<sup>th</sup> of 1893, some rambunctious Princeton sophomores engaged in a *rock-laced* snowball fight.

**Travis:** Aw, no. That's—

**Teresa:** Ooh, yeah.

**Travis:** —that's dirty pool, right there. That's bad sports.

**Teresa:** Yeah, and I—and there on the internet, there were some fairly gruesome pictures of that. Um... by the Great Depression, snowballs were known as hard-time sundaes.

**Travis:** Oh!

**Teresa:** You could—you could make a snowball and, I don't know—

**Travis:** Snow cone.

**Teresa:** —yeah, make a snow cone.

**Travis:** You could make a snow cone, yeah.

**Teresa:** Um, in, uh—

**Travis:** Do you think that that's, now—like, if someone from the Depe—like, if a little kid was suddenly warped forward from the Depression to now and they saw people, like, lining up to get snow cones, and they're like, "You have ice cream! What are you doing?!"



**Teresa:** [laughs] "What are you doing?!"

**Travis:** "Go get ice cream!"

**Teresa:** Uh, in 2013, a German teacher, who was hurt in a snowball fight with students, actually sued the school board and got it classified as a work injury.

**Travis:** Get out.

**Teresa:** Totes.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um—

**Travis:** I have to imagine, uh—I have never been an elementary, middle, or high school teacher. But I have to imagine if there's snow on the ground, you're praying for a snow day not be get *out* of school, 'cause you're like, "As soon as I turn my back, one of those li'l jerks is gettin' me with a snowball."

**Teresa:** [laughs] We'll talk about that kind of etiquette, too.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Snowball fights here in the US, especially in Wisconsin, are serious business.

**Travis:** I'm not surprised by that. What I know about Wisconsin? Not surprised by that at all.

**Teresa:** Here are a couple of things. Uh, so it started in 1923. The students at the University of Wisconsin have an organized snowball fight.

**Travis:** Ooh.

**Teresa:** Uh, Bascom Hill. Uh, and in 2009 there was a *huge* blizzard that actually shut the campus down, which is a *lot*, in Wisconsin.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** That's a lot of snow to shut it down.

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Teresa:** Um, 4,000 plus students appeared to battle it out, and nearly broke the record for the world's largest snowball fight.

**Travis:** Oh my Go—I can't even imagine what that *bedlam* looks like, right?

**Teresa:** Crazy.

**Travis:** Even, or—just imagine if—4,000, right? 2,000 on each side. Everyone throws *one* snowball? Oh my goodness gracious. That's still a lot.

**Teresa:** Um, but... Wisconsin also has a dark side to snowball fights.

**Travis:** Oh. I thought you were just gonna say, like, "[holding back laughter] Wisconsin has a dark side."

**Teresa:** [laughs] I mean... sure.

**Travis:** Probably.

**Teresa:** Um, WASO Wisconsin, or is it maybe WASO?

**Travis:** Or Wayso. Wahsooo!

**Teresa:** Uh... in 1962, passed an ordinance that forbids launching of projectiles on city property. [pauses] Which included snowball fights.

**Travis:** Huh.

**Teresa:** You could actually receive a \$114 fine.

**Travis:** Okay, but not, like, jail time.

**Teresa:** For throwing—no.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** I mean, not—not, like, jail time. But for throwing snowballs!

**Travis:** Imagine how much you needed to, like, hit somebody with a snowball that you were like, "Worth it. I will pay \$114 to hit Steve with this snowball."

**Teresa:** [laughs] Their police chief, uh, Matt Barnes, said the department had used the law to issue tickets just ten times in the past 15 years.

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Teresa:** Uh, which—

**Travis:** Can I just say? [holding back laughter] That's still more than I thought it would be.

**Teresa:** Well, but the ordinance has been cited for, um, shooting crossbows, dropping sandbags off a roof of a downtown parking ramp, and throwing snow at passing cars.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** And the argument is that snowball fights between consenting, you know, combatants, shouldn't be issued. Shouldn't be included in this ordinance, right?

**Travis:** Yeah, I agree. But have you ever been driving and had your car hit with a snowball while you're driving? It's terrifying.

**Teresa:** No, I haven't.

**Travis:** It's happened to me. It's terrifying. 'Cause it makes that, like, really loud *thunk*, and, like, you just assume, like, a bird flew into you or something? It's weird. I don't like it. Don't do it. It's mean.

**Teresa:** Well, so—uh, snowballs thrown at cars or ones that contain ice chunks resulting in injury—um, it's about the intent to damage, right?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Would still be included in this law. But they're gonna change it. Uh, or they... I'm not quite—they article that I—I found didn't say whether or not they have changed it now.

**Travis:** [amused] They will have be going to have changed it.

**Teresa:** [laughs] At the time of this article publish—publishing, they had not yet changed it, but they were going to.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** Um, so that—uh... they make it so that you can throw the snowballs between, like I said, mutual, consenting combatants.

**Travis:** [simultaneously] Combatants, yes.

**Teresa:** Uh, but all of the dangerous stuff would still be included.

**Travis:** Mm, mm-hm.

**Teresa:** Um... [pauses] let me see. Are we into the etiquette yet? Let me look at my notes. [pauses]

Ah, yes! Uh, I wanted to do some—some psychological kind of exploration into—

**Travis:** What does ice think?

**Teresa:** No. Why—

**Travis:** Oh.

**Teresa:** —why do we snowball fight? How—how does snowball fight happen?

**Travis:** That's a good question, because you could look at it two ways, right? Of course there is the—the, uh, violent way. "I want to hit somebody with this thing."

But also, there's, uh, in the move *Guardians*—uh, is that it? When it—

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** —anyways, with Jack Frost.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** Like, snowball fight is like, "We're play—we're playing! We're gonna play with snowballs. We're gonna pretend to fight."

**Teresa:** Exactly. So, why snowball fight? Uh—

**Travis:** Why?

**Teresa:** Why? How?

**Travis:** What *am* snowball?

**Teresa:** How *do* snowball fight happen?

**Travis:** What... say you, snowball?!

**Teresa:** [laughs] Alright. Uh, so Simon Fanshawe, who is a writer and a broadcaster and the author—

**Travis:** And a snowman. [laughs quietly]

**Teresa:** No... And the author of *The Done Thing: Negotiating the Minefield of Modern Manners*.

**Travis:** Ooh!

**Teresa:** Says that snowball fighting is about, um... is about the night of misrule kind of complex, right? So, you've heard about *Twelfth Night*.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** We've talked about *Twelfth Night*.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** Um, and he says that those complaining about being hit by a snowball completely miss the point, because this night of misrule thing is about how...

**Travis:** You blow off steam.

**Teresa:** Well, not exactly, but it's, like, topsy-turvy, right? Uh, in *Twelfth Night*, some of the festivities include—you know, the servants become the master and

the master becomes the servants, so we all have to, like... switch roles, and circumvent authority figures, and all that kind of stuff, right?

So, when a snowstorm happens, they turn society's normal structure of authority on its head.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, and that allows kids to mock and embarrass adults in a way that they would never normally do. Right?

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Throw snowballs at them.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** So, according to him, it's perfectly acceptable for children to throw snowballs at strangers when that happens, right?

[pause]

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Well, I think it—I think it's a—

**Travis:** I understand.

**Teresa:** —interesting psychological point of view, isn't it?

**Travis:** I mean, yes. Okay. I understand the logic... that what you're saying is... a—a child throwing a snowball at, say, a teacher... would make the child feel empowered, without actually doing harm to the teacher? To the authority figure.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** And I will say that if you have ever, like—especially, I think, at night or, like, first thing in the morning, like, looked out a window and seen the world blanketed in a thick covering of snow and thought, "Wow—" like, it does look different. It does seem like the world has changed.

**Teresa:** Right, yes.

**Travis:** I understand all that. Doesn't change the fact [through laughter] that if I got hit in the face by a snowball that some little snot threw at me—

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** —I wouldn't be like "Ah, I get it. This is night of misrule logic."

**Teresa:** You don't—

**Travis:** "Good work, Timothy."

**Teresa:** —you don't think that you would just kind of grimace and, you know, raise your fist and "[grumbles] You dern kids!"

**Travis:** Oh, no, I'd def—I'd definitely "dern kids" it.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** I would Laura Dern those kids. But I would probably pick up a *bigger* hunk of snow and throw it back at—

**Teresa:** [simultaneously] Throw it back—

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** Well, those are a couple of etiquette breaches.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** Um, I—I'll discuss that—

**Travis:** Then maybe I would just—

**Teresa:** —a little bit.

**Travis:** —I would just, you know, like, rent a car, or buy alcohol, or go vote, and rub that in their faces.

**Teresa:** Alright.

**Travis:** You know? So, like, "Look what I can do!"

**Teresa:** Um, one more thing, I promise. One more thing until we get to the etiquette.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** I want to talk about... how to make the perfect snowball.

**Travis:** Uh-huh?

**Teresa:** Um, Ken Lebrecht, who is a physics professor at CalTech, is kind of a self-professed snowball... obsessed professor. [laughs] Say that three times fast.

**Travis:** Ob—obsess—obsesser profe—ob—

**Teresa:** Obsessor.

**Travis:** —Professor Obsesser. Okay.

**Teresa:** Snowball... Obsesser.

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** Here we go. Um, and he says that it's a lot more complicated than you might think to make the perfect snowball. You need to take into account humidity, temperature, and pressure, and the particulates of the snow, right?

**Travis:** ... Yes?

**Teresa:** Um, the ground temperature—

**Travis:** How much mud is involved.

**Teresa:** —yeah. I mean, yeah.

**Travis:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Teresa:** Um, the ground—



**Travis:** Is there any dog pee in it?

[pauses]

**Teresa:** It—

**Travis:** Don't throw yellow snow.

**Teresa:** Can you think of any other particulates?

**Travis:** Umm... cigarette butts?

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Travis:** Maybe some... no. I was gonna say "gravel," but don't.

**Teresa:** Don't.

**Travis:** Don't use gravel. That's bad... sport.

**Teresa:** Moving on. The ground temperature has the most to do with making a good snowball. Um, so you want to find someplace that's a little bit warmer, so pick some snow that's been sitting in the sun is a good idea, because it will pack just a little bit better if it's just above freezing, okay?

Um... and then what you want to do is, if you're—if you can't find the snow that's in a little bit of a warmer spot, your best bet is to use your hands, and for this, you have to—I would suggest gloves, not bare hands.

Um, you wanna use gloves over mittens, because gloves have more surface area, so they release more of your body heat than the mittens, which keep them all in, so you'll have colder hands, but better snowballs, if you wear gloves.

**Travis:** Maybe bring special—maybe bring a second set of gloves if you're going to snowball fight, if that's your plan, because I think that the, like... woolen, like, gloves work best to smooth the ball—

**Teresa:** Hmm, okay.

**Travis:** —but it also soaks in and gets your fingers wet, so it'd be nice to switch to a—a warmer pair.

**Teresa:** Right. Um, and there's a couple of different, like, technological helps out there for snowball making. There's some—

**Travis:** A snowball robot.

**Teresa:** [laughs] A s—

**Travis:** A snowbot.

**Teresa:** —a s—[laughs loudly] Yes.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** A snowbot. Perfect.

**Travis:** Thank you.

**Teresa:** Um, there's something called a flexible flyer—no, sorry. The company Flexible Flyer—

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** —makes a snowball maker, um, that's kind of like a scoop of, like—crossed with a pair of tongs?

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Teresa:** So you can—

**Travis:** I think I've seen that.

**Teresa:** —yeah, you can—

**Travis:** Like, SkyMall.

**Teresa:** —you can make perfect round snowballs like that. You'd still have to, I think, pack it, or something.

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** Um, and then... there's something called a snow fling, which is a long plastic implement with a hole in the end that helps you scoop it, and it actually—you can throw it from the scoop, the fling, like you're playing lacrosse.

**Travis:** Oh, see, I'm picturing, like, the thing that you can throw a ball for a dog, right? Where you pick it up and throw it with that?

**Teresa:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Travis:** Yeah. Like that. Got it.

**Teresa:** And then there's the snowball blaster.

**Travis:** Whoaa, fr—probably, like, from Nerf, right?

**Teresa:** I'm not sure.

**Travis:** Probably.

**Teresa:** But it is—you press the top—you press snow into the top, um, of this gun-looking thing—

**Travis:** Oh, boy.

**Teresa:** —that throw—that actually makes *three* spherical snowballs, and then you have to use a kind of, like, slingshot cannon thing to actually throw it.

**Travis:** Oh, boy.

**Teresa:** So the—the maker looks kind of like a gun, and then you—you slingshot it.

**Travis:** Okay. [through laughter] Or you could just pick it up with your hands and throw it. You know, whatever. Alright.

**Teresa:** I mean, sure.

**Travis:** Are you ready to get to the etiquette now?

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** Ugh.

**Teresa:** You still have a couple things to do if you're gonna make snowball into snowball fight!

**Travis:** Okay. But first... how about some thank you notes for our sponsors?

**Teresa:** Okay.

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[theme music plays]

**Teresa:** This week we are sponsored in part by Betabrand! Getting dressed and ready for work and deciding if today is a stylish day or a comfortable day? Now, thanks to Betabrand's dress pant yoga pants, you don't have to decide!

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**Travis:** We also wanna say thank you to BlueVine! You started a business! That's great! You don't have any money! That's bad.

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**Speaker One:** [radio static] Mission Control, this is Rocket Ship One. Come in, Mission Control.

**Mission Control:** [radio static] This is Mission Control, go ahead.

**Speaker One:** [radio static] We have incoming, and it looks big.

**Mission Control:** [radio static] Can you identify?

**Speaker One:** It looks like... [electronic beeping] some sort of... pledge drive. Affirmative! It's Max Fun Drive.

**Mission Control:** [radio static] That's a verified Max Fun Drive. Countdown to Max Fun Drive is initiated. Can you project a time to intercept?

**Speaker One:** [radio static] Based on the current trajectory, Max Fun Drive will be here from March 16 to March 27.

**Mission Control:** [radio static] March 16 to March 27, roger. Rocket Ship One, can you confirm a visual on common Max Fun Drive phenomena, such as the best episodes of the year, bonus content, and special gifts for new and upgrading monthly members?

**Speaker One:** [radio static] We have a visual. Great episodes, bonus content, premium gifts confirmed, and more. [radio static] Sure sounds quiet down there. Mission Control, what's your status?

**Mission Control:** [radio static] All systems go, Rocket Ship One, just catchin' up on our favorite Max Fun shows so we can tune into Max Fun Drive episodes between March 16 and March 27. Over and out. [laughs quietly] [radio static]

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**Ben:** Alright, Adam. Uh, Maximum Fun wants us to record, like, a promo to tell people that they should listen to *The Greatest Generation*. You wanna do that?

**Adam:** No! I am tired of all the extra work. I just wanna talk about *Star Trek* with my friend!

**Ben:** I—I think it—it would be good to, like, try and get some new listeners by appealing to the audiences of other shows? Like, this—this will only take a minute or two. It could be good for us.

**Adam:** We sit down for an hour every week and talk about a *Star Trek* episode and make a bunch of idiotic fart jokes about it. It's embarrassing! If it got out that we made this show, I think it would make us unemployable.

**Ben:** Adam... I have bad news for you. We have tens of thousands of listeners at Maximumfun.org.

**Adam:** Oh my God... I think I'm gonna throw up.

**Ben:** *The Greatest Generation!* A *Star Trek* podcast by a couple of guys who are a little bit embarrassed to have a *Star Trek* podcast. Every Monday, on Maximumfun.org.

**Adam:** I'm really gonna be sick.

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**Travis:** Okay. How do you snowball?

**Teresa:** We're gonna get there, I promise. How to s—now you have your snowball.

**Travis:** Okay. Can I just say, real quick—

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Travis:** —and we'll—I think we'll hit on this again in the questions. *But*, if you want to start a snowball fight and not just hit someone with a snowball, I would suggest you don't wanna pack it too tight or too hard. What you want is for it kinda "pfft" on impact, right?

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** You're not trying to knock them off their feet with, like, a hunk of ice. And sometimes if you pack too tight and, like, smooth—it'll kind of melt and refreeze, and be this, like, super hard—you want it to stay together just long enough to impact the person so that you get the impact, but it's not like a hard, solid impact?

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** It just kind of "fwsh" out on them.

**Teresa:** Um, and—

**Travis:** And aim for, like, the chest, not the head.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** Don't aim for the head.

**Teresa:** And if you're doing your snowball fight, you really should stockpile it, right?

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** Have 'em ready. Um, and the best way to be able to do that, says this professor... is to make a, uh, fort.

**Travis:** Oh, yes. Uh—yes.

**Teresa:** And stockpile behind the fort. The way to make the fort is you want to compact the snow and let it sit for a little bit, because the weight of the snow on top of the snow is what makes the fort to be—be able to withstand impacts.

**Travis:** I remember one year, um, behind our house growing up—like, it was like all the houses were kind of on the perimeter, and in the middle of the square it was just kind of a big yard. So you could basically walk from the back of my house to the street on the opposite side of the block, like, between the houses.

**Teresa:** Sure.

**Travis:** Uh, and so one year it snowed over, like, a foot and a half. There was, like, a lot. It was a blizzard. And we, like, made tunnels under the snow.

**Teresa:** [excited] Ooh!

**Travis:** But, like, you—it was *perfect* snow-forting snow, right? It was—

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** —it stayed together, but you could basically just, like, jump off the back of our [unintelligible] fence into the snow—

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** —and make a foot and a half tall, like, hole, where you could, like, foxhole out of it and throw snowballs.

**Teresa:** Very cool! And that's what I think you should do for a snowball fight. If you're gonna be like, "We're gonna *do* this." Like, snowball-maged—ageddon.

**Travis:** Yeah.



**Teresa:** Is you should build two forts, or at least two walls, on opposite side of the yard so that you can make, like, an organized thing out of it. Like, with teams and stockpiles and all that kind of great stuff.

**Travis:** Well, you also know that everyone is—is, as we have said earlier, a willing participant, right?

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** That you're not just, like, springin' it on people. And, you know—like, that was the thing for me. If I walked by and suddenly someone stood up with an armful of snowballs and started throwing at the—me—at them—throwing them at me.

**Teresa:** Right, yes. There it is. [laughs]

**Travis:** And I was not prepared—you know, and I was—like, I wouldn't wanna do that, right? That's not fair.

But if it was like, "Now we're preparing, and making our arsenal, and, like, setting up our wall!" Like, that's the fun of it, right? 'Cause the throwing will last... two minutes.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** Right?

**Teresa:** Until everybody gets too cold and calls a truce.

**Travis:** Right, exactly.

**Teresa:** Alright. Finally. The etiquette.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** We've covered a couple of 'em already. You said make sure that you don't pack it so tight that it turns to ice or doesn't explode when you—when it impacts something.

Um, if you don't want to be kind of, like, in the thick of it, hang towards the peripheries, right? Because snowballs don't travel very far.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** Um—

**Travis:** Or you could do like they used to do during, like, the Civil War, and just, like, set up a picnic blanket—

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** —and just, like—and a big parasol—

**Teresa:** [posh Southern accent] And watch the snowballs in the afternoon.

**Travis:** —yeah, exactly.

**Teresa:** Sure. Um, and if you wanna be in the middle, conversely, uh, wear goggles!

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** It's a really great addition. Um, because—

**Travis:** Especially if you wear glasses.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Yeah. Get some of those, like, sports goggles that go over your glasses.

**Teresa:** Or even just, like, safety goggles.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Anything to keep the snow off your eyes, because one, you need... to see, to throw a snowball. And two, that's—that's a really terrible place to get snow, if you happen to get snow in the face. And you should *never* throw snow in anybody else's face. It's not fun.

**Travis:** You could get—

**Teresa:** That ends it right away.

**Travis:** —you could get a paintball mask and, like, a paintball vest, paint 'em white—

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** —and just make it, like, full—like, "Where'd he go? He's a ghost!" Right?

**Teresa:** [holding back laughter] I mean, we are talking about, like, setting up a date for a snowball fight, aren't we?

**Travis:** We—"Oh, beware the phantom!"

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** "He comes outta nowhere! He comes in the night, with the snowballs!"

**Teresa:** And here's the last thing. Really the etiquette comes down to, everyone is expected to have fun.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** If someone isn't having fun... it's not good. You have to stop. So anything that you would do to make someone else not have fun, don't do it. And anything—and if you are not having fun, communicate that and say that you're done, because... snow down the pants, snow in your face—

**Travis:** [holding back laughter] S'no fun.

**Teresa:** S'no fun.

**Travis:** I'm looking forward to Bebe and Dot being old enough to just pelt me with snowballs, right? 'Cause then I can intentionally miss them—well, I'll try.  
[laughs]

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** I don't have very good aim. I mean, I—I don't mean to make it sound like I'm, like, a pinpoint pitcher or whatever, but I can try to miss them while they just destroy me with snowballs.

Alright. Uh, we have some questions, here. This is from Sophie.

"How do you make them more fair? I always get absolutely wrecked, and it sucks."

**Teresa:** I think that the making 'em more fair comes from the pre-planning we were talking about.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Um, you know, be like, "Snowball fight commences in T-minus ten minutes."

**Travis:** Right.

**Teresa:** So everybody has time to make their stockpile, or make their wall, or... get out! [laughs]

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** So, I think that's what you have to do. There has to be an element of organization to begin with, so that then you can go pell-mell and—and... get it goin'.

**Travis:** And the fort helps. The fort gives you somewhere to duck behind—

**Teresa:** [simultaneously] The fort definitely helps.

**Travis:** —take a breath. I agree. AJ asks:

"How do you explain to kids three to four years old both how to do a snowball fight and how to be careful and not purposefully hurt each other?"

Man, that's really hard, right? Because this is something that happens with Bebe, where pretend... can so very easily—not out of malice, but just out of excitement and energy, turn into for-real.

Um, and you know what I would do—

**Baby Dot:** [baby noises]

**Travis:** —with three to four year olds? Is I would set up a snowman, or snowpeople, like, have a snow army, and have the kids throw against the snow army.

**Teresa:** [gasps] That's a great idea! Dot agrees.

**Travis:** Yeah. Hi, Dot! Welcome to the studio!

**Teresa:** Everybody's visiting today.

**Baby Dot:** [baby noises]

**Travis:** Yeah. And that way they can get the practice in, and you can, like, maybe even paint a target on the snowman's belly.

**Teresa:** Yeah. Make it so that they're not throwing at each other.

**Travis:** Right. And that way you can also talk about, like, why we don't do it to hurt, and all that stuff, without risking a kid, uh, getting hurt, and then having to stop the whole thing.

**Teresa:** Exactly.

**Baby Dot:** [baby noises]

**Travis:** Uh, Danny asks:

"What's the best way to initiate a snowball fight?"

I think—man, [laughs] I hate to say this, like, it's some of the more kind of complicated social interactions that we have talked about before, but I think open and honest communication is the way to go!

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** "I would like to snowball fight with you. Would you like to snowball fight with me?"

**Teresa:** Well, may I suggest that, um... you pick the right person to initiate with. So, someone who is a friend.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** Someone who is about your size—

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** —or age. Not children. Don't throw balls at children.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** Um, and if someone who, uh—I hate to say this—is elderly—

**Travis:** Uh-huh?

**Teresa:** —don't throw snowballs at them. But if they—

**Travis:** Unless they want to.

**Teresa:** —if they throw a snowball at you, that is, like—

**Travis:** You can engage.

**Teresa:** —you can engage.

**Travis:** You have our permission to engage. Um, and I—I—like I said, I think, like, "Hey, let's snowball fight!" Is better than, like, hitting someone and saying, "Snowball fight me!" Right?

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** 'Cause now they're feeling off guard, they're feeling unprepared, all of things that would not get them engaged. I would say, like, if you're talking about adult, right? Or, you know, whatever age that—post high school, right?

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** Then I would say, even, like, setting up a group chat to say, like, "Hey, do you guys want to snowball fight this afternoon? We're all out of school." Or "Aw, it snowed last night! Do you wanna meet and have a snowball fight and go sledding and make a day of it?"

**Teresa:** I mean, even if you can't do that, like I said earlier, if you just say "We're gonna have a snowball fight in five minutes."

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** "Make your balls or get outta here."

**Travis:** Uh, Izzy asked:

"What's a—what—what is a good location to snowball fight?"

**Teresa:** I think, um, someplace where there's at least, like, you know, 20 feet of open space.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** But then, it's always great to have kind of like a—a court, right? So that you've got, like, trees or rocks or bushes or something.

**Travis:** Got some coverage.

**Teresa:** Coverage, yeah, that's what I'm talking about.

**Travis:** Uh, I also think "Not full of civilians." Like, maybe not a sidewalk where people might be walking through.

**Teresa:** I think a backyard's a good idea, like you were talking about.

**Travis:** Backyard's a good idea. Uh, a park's a good idea? Don't do it, like, in the middle of a sledding hill, for example, where people are moving through and might be caught in the crossfire.

**Teresa:** AKA *Bob's Burgers*.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** That's a good show.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** A good, uh, episode.

**Baby Dot:** [simultaneously] [burps quietly]

**Travis:** It—it is a good show. It's also a good episode. I would say, like, you're looking for a big, open field. Very—

**Teresa:** I hope the microphone caught, uh, her giant burp.

**Travis:** Did she have a giant burp?

**Teresa:** She did! I hope the microphone caught it.

**Travis:** Good job!

**Teresa:** So the internet—

**Travis:** I think you probably need about 10 to 20 feet between. Not too much more than—you don't need, like, a football field.

**Teresa:** Of course! Well, because like I said earlier, the snowballs, they don't hold together very long.

**Travis:** Yeah. And they shouldn't.

**Baby Dot:** [baby noises]

**Teresa:** They shouldn't.

**Travis:** They should hold just long enough to impact. Uh, one last. This is from Van.

"For what reason can you pause a snowball fight or call a timeout?"

**Teresa:** Um, if someone gets hurt.



**Travis:** Yeah, for sure.

**Teresa:** You definitely can call a timeout. Um, if both sides agree to a truce for a—for re—what do you—like, ammo?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Reloading?

**Travis:** Reloading. Or for a hot cocoa break.

**Teresa:** Sure.

**Travis:** Needs to happen. Um, maybe have, like, a safe word? For a ceasefire?

**Teresa:** [laughs] A white flag.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Something—something established of, like, "When this happens, this isn't, like, me playing a game that—" you know, saying like, "Oh—" it's not a ruse. I've been injured. Right?

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** Some kind of word that indicates that. Might I recommend "pineapple"? It's a good one.

**Teresa:** It just wouldn't come up in normal snow fights.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** The snow fight situations.

**Travis:** Exactly. Um, so that's gonna do it. Uh, so, coming up, starting here—uh, let's see. Starting on March 16<sup>th</sup>, here comes the Max Fun Drive!

**Teresa:** [fanfare]

**Travis:** We're so excited. We love the Max Fun Drive.

**Baby Dot:** [baby noises]

**Travis:** It's your chance to support the podcasts you love while getting rewarded for that support. Uh, you're gonna, you know, go to the website. You're gonna choose a support level. You're gonna get rewards for that level. Or maybe you're gonna upgrade your level, and you've already been a donor. All these things. It's great, and we've got bonus episodes coming out in the donor feed, all of these things.

It's super cool, my favorite time of year, so we're looking forward to that. Uh, also, *My Brother, My Brother and Me* and *Adventure Zone* are going on tour. Uh, we're—

**Teresa:** You can get all of those dates at, uh, the McElroy Family website.

**Travis:** Correct. [mcelroy.family](http://mcelroy.family), click on "Tours." Uh, right now it's the first and last weekend of April, I believe? Go check those out.

**Baby Dot:** [fussing]

**Travis:** Go check out [mcelroymerch.com](http://mcelroymerch.com) for all the McElroy merch. Uh, Baby Dot is ready to record *her* podcast and we're taking up her studio time—

**Teresa:** She says, "Get outta the studio!"

**Travis:** "I gotta do *Baby Talk with Dot!*" Um, so what else, Teresa?

**Teresa:** Well, thank you to Brent "brentalfloss" Black for our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found.

Thank you to Kayla M. Wasil for the Twitter thumbnail art. You can, uh, submit your questions for our topics @shmannerscast, but if you have a topic—

**Travis:** On Twitter.

**Teresa:** —on Twitter. Uh, please send *topic* suggestions to [shmannerscast@gmail.com](mailto:shmannerscast@gmail.com).

Thank you to Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover banner of our fan-run Facebook group. Go ahead and join that group on Facebook if you love to get and give excellent advice from other *Shmanner* Fanners.

**Travis:** Uh, this topic, by the way, thank you for reminding me, was recommended by Sheila Fizer. Thank you, Sheila, for recommending snowball fights! This was a fun one.

Um, and yeah, that's gonna do it for us. So, join us again next week.

**Teresa:** No RSVP required!

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

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

[theme music plays]

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[chord]

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