

Shmanners 135: Retail: Grocery Store

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Travis: Uh, I'm gonna need a cleanup on aisle three. I repeat, uh cleanup on aisle three. Someone has spilled podcast everywhere.

Teresa: It's Shmanners!

[theme music plays]

Travis: Hello internet! I am your husband-host, Travis McElroy.

Teresa: And I'm your wife-host, Teresa McElroy!

Travis: And you're listening to Shmanners!

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette...

Travis: ... for ordinary occasions. Hello, my dove.

Teresa: Hello, dear.

Travis: How are you?

Teresa: I think I'm alright.

Travis: Yeah. We're on the mend.

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Uh, we all got sick, post New York Comic Con. Listen, we had just a real great time.

Teresa: Absolutely.

Travis: Um, thank you again to everybody who came out. But...

Teresa: But I believe that they call it “the crud.”

Travis: Yes, the “con crud.” Um... I was sick, Teresa was sick, and Bebe was sick.

Teresa: Ugh... [sighs]

Travis: It was... oh goosh. And I tell ya, I tell ya—oh gosh, that the, uh, the baby doesn’t care when you’re sick!

Teresa: Nope!

Travis: Nooo, oh goodness. I meant to say oh goodness... And I think I also tried to say “oh gosh,” and it came out as “oh goosh.”

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And I’m... so sorry for that, everybody.

Teresa: Listen, I’m okay with it.

Travis: Um, but yeah. Babies... when you’re sick?

Teresa: They don’t care.

Travis: She does not care! Um... But we’re back now. We hope you enjoyed part one of, uh, our episode from London Podcast Festival about gin. Uh, part two will be coming up soon. Maybe next week. We’ll see how we all feel.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Uh, but here we are. We’re gonna talk about a different topic this week, the thing that we promised you last week. We’re gonna talk—and listen, this is near and dear to my heart. We’re gonna talk about grocery

stores, and here's the thing – I feel like I have a little bit of expertise here, because I shopped at grocery stores.

Teresa: Oh, you have, have you?

Travis: Yeah, I—I have—and I would—you know what? I'm gonna say it. I think I'm super good at it.

Teresa: Oh! Tell us about your, uh, grocery shopping experience.

Travis: Here's the thing... I don't like to go in with a list, if I can help it. Unless like, I'm still—unless I'm specifically making, like, a dish, or like, baking or something, where I know I need specific things... And instead, I prefer a much more, um—I don't know, ephemeral? A much more spiritual journey thorough...

I start at one side, the beginning of one aisle, and you know, I just kind of zig-zag my way through the aisles, and I let the food speak to me. And often, I say out loud, "Yeah, I'll eat this!" [laughs] And then I put it into the cart. And I will say, um... speaking of Bebe, she is an absolute delight to go grocery shopping with, because she is very—

Teresa: Somebody knock on some wood, oh my gosh.

Travis: Yes, I know. She's very restrained. Like, and also, the stuff that she likes is just like, fruit. So...

Teresa: She's happy to go for the ride, most of the time.

Travis: Yeah. She just like's sitting in the cart. And she likes picking things out. But anyways, we're talking about grocery stores.

Teresa: Um, you didn't ask me about my grocery store experience!

Travis: Oh yes, of course. Your grocery shopping experience.

Teresa: So everything that Travis just said... the complete opposite.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Because I like to go in with a list, I like to go get what I want and get out. I actually try to avoid going through the aisles of dried goods, and I usually just stick to the perimeter.

Travis: [sighs]

Teresa: To get what I need.

Travis: Here's the thing. I see the strong suit... I see the strength in yours, right? Because it means you don't end up with food you don't need. But the strength of mine is, you end up with stuff you didn't know you needed, and then you see it, and you're like, one, either, "Oh yeah, we *are* out of that." Or like, "Oh! A jar of chimichurri sauce. Sure!"

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: And then you get it, and then you use it, and it's really good. Um, but I will say that we have previously talked about, like, retail experiences.

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Travis: And even though I don't know that everyone will think of it this way, I'm going to say that I think that um, grocery stores definitely fall into the retail experience category.

Teresa: Sure! Sure.

Travis: I think people think differently, cause like, instead of TVs, it's like... y'know, apples or whatever? But, I'm going to call this, in what I put in the title, you know, retail... whatever, grocery stores.

Teresa: Okay. Well, so, a little bit of background about the "grocery store" or the supermarket, as I am going—there... in our, you know... [sighs] Daily lives, I would say that—that now these two terms are interchangeable. Um,

but before, what would happen was, if you lived in the city, um, you had the grocery, which was usually dry goods.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Shelf stable things. You know, rice, flour... uh, pickled items, things like this.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Um, and then you had the "green grocers", which was the fruits and vegetables. Then you had the bakery. Obvs. And then you had the butcher. So...

Travis: And then you had the candlestick maker—

Teresa: No. [mumbles]

Travis: Okay, okay.

Teresa: Um, and these were usually located quite close, just for the—the convenience of it, you know. Um, but if you lived out in the rural areas, you were responsible for a lot more of your food. Um, because, sure, there might be a market to go to, but it could be, y'know, an all-day thing? Um, and... Not to say that there weren't other ways of getting the things you needed. There were, you know, mail-order catalogs and—

Travis: Or you did it yourself.

Teresa: You did it yourself. If you were, you know, accomplished, you could salt things, pickle things, dry things... stuff like that. But then, as far as like, fresh produce, I don't think that we can talk about the supermarket slash grocery without talking about the refrigerator a little bit.

Travis: Uh-huh?

Teresa: Um... Iceboxes in general, had been around since like, the 1910s?

Um, in the way that we think of, like the actual kind of, you know, a tin lined box with the ice at the top, and a drip pan underneath, and things like that.

But before that, um, sometimes you stored things underground in like, a cellar, or even if it was cool enough, outside. That was your—[laughs] Your walk-in refrigerator was the back door.

Travis: That's a thing that you see a lot. We—whenever we go to places, the first thing we do is like, look for old buildings or old whatever. We love 'em. And every time, uh—like when we were in London, and when we were in Scotland for our honeymoon and stuff, we liked to visit castles. And in them, there are like kind of these cold cellars, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Where they dig them down.

Teresa: Yup.

Travis: 'Til they get to where it's cold, and you don't get the heat from the sun, and then they keep food down there. It's not like, y'know, 30 degrees or whatever, but it's cooler than room temperature?

Teresa: It is—it is chilled.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Um... And of course, there was always, if you had, um, an ice supply nearby, you could make your own kind of cooler-icebox area. Um, but the refrigerator closest to we know now, the Freon refrigerator, um... really wasn't invented by Frigidaire until 1923.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So before that, like I said, you had to be pretty accomplished as how you were going to keep things, or... you just had to go on almost a daily, maybe every other... maybe weekly, for some things... shop.

Travis: Well, and as you said, I mean, a lot of that shelf stable stuff, like if you think about like, for example, potatoes, you don't have to put in a refrigerator. Rice, you don't have to put in a—like, those kinds of things. And so then when you're talking about, like green vegetables or meat...

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: You kinda... got it as you needed it, yeah.

Teresa: I mean like I said, unless you could dry it, or spice it, or smoke it, or pickle it, or... you know, things like that. And people were pretty good at that kind of stuff. I mean, I guess if you... if you weren't—[laughs] Weren't too concerned about foodborne illness, if you make a roast turkey on Sunday, you can make turkey sandwiches the next day, and then...

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Turkey soup the next day, and hopefully you use it all before it goes bad. Um, so then... so we have the green grocers. We have the butcher, the bakery, and then the, uh, regular grocery. But still, the way that these things worked would be a little more... wouldn't be very familiar to us, until about the 1930s. Um... when the first Piggly Wiggly was opened.

Travis: [excited gasp]

Teresa: I know! [laughs] You do recognize that, don't you?

Travis: Piggly Wiggly was the first?

Teresa: Mm-hmm!

Travis: You did it, Piggly Wiggly!

Teresa: In 1936...

Travis: I'm not saying that Piggly Wiggly is the *funniest* name for a market, but it's up there.

Teresa: It's up there.

Travis: I—I think you would be hard-pressed to come up with something that is both fun to say, and conjures... such a funny image. Like, a wiggly pig? That's so good! [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs] Well so, until this time, it was largely counter service. You went with your list to an employee, handed it to *them*, and they went around and picked the things. Um... and then, what happened was, because of the way that people wanted—you know, they wanted more selection, maybe wanted different things...

Travis: They wanted control.

Teresa: They wanted a little more control. The Piggly Wiggly, um, started letting you do your own shopping, but it still looked kinda like... like an amusement park queue, right? So they had the shelves that were lined, like—like an amusement park queue, with like, ropes, to make you go one way, snake kind of through and around, and then past the counter to pay.

Travis: As it should be.

Teresa: [laughs] It was not this free-wheeling, go-any-way-you-want-to grocery store experience.

Travis: Ugh, that sounds so much better! Listen, I know that like... I don't mean it's better in that like... I probably would get frustrated if I was like, "Oh wait, I forgot something! Oh no, it's all the way back at the beginning." But the idea of like... oh, we'll talk more later! We're gonna talk about cart etiquette, a lot. I have *strong* feelings.

Teresa: Well, and here is where I think we need to talk about grocery carts.

Travis: Okay, perfect!

Teresa: Um... Again, this is something that was not really available until this uh... This customer-focused shop started going, uh, because you would have either like, a small wooden or a wire basket, even. You know, we have those today. Mostly plastic. Um... But once people's baskets were full, they'd go, and you'd check out. Well, Sylvan Goldman...

Travis: Mm-hmm?

Teresa: Who is the owner of the Piggy Wiggly chain. Well, was.

Travis: [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs] He's probably dead now. But...

Travis: What a great name. See? Sylv—oh, that's a great name for Piggly—oh! A lot of good names here!

Teresa: A lot of good names here. Um, is credited with also inventing the grocery trolley, or the grocery cart!

Travis: Okay! So, I would like to share with you now, my strong feelings about grocery cart etiquette.

Teresa: Okay?

Travis: One... we had a question, I'm gonna see if I can find it now, but we had a question where somebody asked like...

Teresa: You're going terrifically out of order, here.

Travis: I know, but like you're bringing it up, so I'm going to say. Um... 'cause lots of people ask questions about like, who has the right of way, and like this—I think that you should do very much like, uh... at least here in America, here in the U.S., the road? You know, you drive on the right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm?

Travis: And you can kind of pass, uh on the left, if you need to? But, this is the most important thing, cause this is the thing that I see people break this rule, all the time. Don't park your cart on one side, and then step over to the other side to look.

Teresa: Hmm!

Travis: Because then, you and your cart are taking up the whole aisle.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: You want to have your cart on the same side of the aisle as you, right beside you. And don't stop your cart right next to where someone else has stopped their cart, or then once again, you are both blocking the whole aisle. It's—

Teresa: Sounds good.

Travis: That, to me, is the thing that is most frustrating to me, how often I see people who have stopped their carts either side-by-side, or they stopped their cart and then crossed to the other side of the aisle to look and pick out a thing.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: [sighs]

Teresa: Can you believe that when these carts were first introduced, though, they needed some encouragement to get people to use them? According to one account, men were too proud to admit that they didn't want—that they needed help carrying food, and women were cited as saying that they had pushed enough baby buggies, that they don't wanna use one for shopping, too.

Travis: Now, I don't know if it is because I am a man, but I will say that... I—not anymore, not now, that like, I am an adult who is buying food for like, multiple people in the house. But I remember for a long time I'd go in and be like—I'd have to go back to get a cart to put my stuff in. You know what I mean? Like I'd walk in and be like, "I'm fine! I've got it! I'll juggle it, I guess." I don't know why, but I—maybe it is because I'm a man. Oh no!

Teresa: Society's expectations are weighing heavily on you.

Travis: [sighs dramatically and whispers] Oh nooo!

Teresa: Anyway, um... [laughs] So what Goldman did, uh... the legend goes, is that he hired attractive people to just push the carts around and pretend to shop.

Travis: Huh!

Teresa: And so, when they would be handing out these carts – 'cause they're usually was an attendant handing out carts – then, when people declined them, it would be like, "Well, why not? Those people are using it!" And the peer pressure.

Travis: It worked.

Teresa: Worked.

Travis: Here's—here's the uh, another thing I will say on carts, before we move on, is... when you are done with your cart, return it either to the store if there is no cart corral area, or to the cart corral. Do not just leave it in the parking lot, and this is for many reasons. One, people have to go out and get those carts, I've had to do it before at various jobs that I've worked. But also, it's dangerous, and I'm sure we've talked about this before, but *don't* leave your carts just like, loose in the parking lot. It is—it is a dangerous, um, and... just put it back in the cart corral.

Teresa: It also, um, contributes to higher grocery prices.

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: Because those carts are like, \$100 bucks each.

Travis: And that's the thing. Like, that's why I like Aldi! I don't know, maybe there are bad things about Aldi, but there are many things I like about Aldi, and one of them is like, if you want to get a cart, you gotta put a quarter in, and if you wanna get your quarter back, you gotta put the cart back.

Teresa: Yup!

Travis: And for a quarter, it is amazing, the lengths I will go to to get that quarter back. [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs] And finally, I think that, if you traveled back in time to the end of World War II, that is when we would absolutely recognize the supermarket, um, of the time. So, with the... shopping carts, with the self service, with all the different little kind of areas of the bakery and the, um, dry goods and the butcher, and all that kind of stuff...

Um, because... people not only were moving away from city centers, they expected the convenience of the city to come with them to the suburbs.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: You know, that—that G.I. American dream of a house and a yard and a car and a refrigerator. Um... the kind of modern ideal was, you went shopping closer to once a week. Um, and even though your milk was still being delivered, ice delivery at that point was pretty nonexistent, because of the—the modern conveniences, located in—in the kitchens of Americans.

Travis: So we have lots and lots of questions, as you might imagine, that we will give you advice on, but first... we'd like to give a few thank you notes to our sponsors!

[theme music plays]

Teresa: Shmanners this week is sponsored in part by... Sun Basket! So you can fuel your body without having to do a ton of work, with easy to prepare meal-kit delivery from Sun Basket. Now—

Travis: We just had one last night!

Teresa: We did have one last night, and what I really liked... You actually mentioned this, you were like, "I seem to be done with dinner earlier than usual!"

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: That's because a lot of these uh, Sun Basket meals can be made in as little as 15 minutes!

Travis: I also, um... And this is just a little thing, but I think it's really nice and cute. In the instructions, there is a specific section that says, "Kids can help with blank." And it says—like, there's little like, "Kids can help measure this," or, "Kids can help stir this." And it's just fun. We have this little like kitchen stand-thing for Bebe to stand at the counter with me. I don't let her chop the vegetables or anything.

Teresa: [laughs] Not yet!

Travis: But like, she can stir stuff or—

Teresa: Wait until she's three!

Travis: Yeah! And like, that's really fun. But also, the thing we had last night, was like steaks with this kind of anchovy... like, parsley sauce? And like, roasted broccoli, and it was just—it was really good. [laughs]

Teresa: It was good!

Travis: I really enjoyed it.

Teresa: Um, and Sun Basket make sure that they ship fresh, and mostly organic, and responsibly raised meats and seafood, directly to their—your door. And speaking of the meals, there are sooo many recipes to choose from. You have options for paleo, gluten-free, uh, something they're calling "lean and clean." Vegan, diabetes-friendly... I mean, the list just goes on and on.

So, for our listeners, you can get \$35 off your first order at Sun Basket, if you go to SunBasket.com/Shmanners. Once again, that's SunBasket.com/Shmanners for \$35 off. SunBasket.com/Shmanners.

Travis: I would like to give a thank you note to Squarespace. And listen, I know we've talked about Squarespace before, and I know we've talked about ButtercupisaVeryGoodGirl.com before, but the thing is... I love Squarespace! Squarespace makes it easy to create a beautiful website that you are proud of, a website that you can use to showcase your work, or—

Teresa: Or your dog!

Travis: Or your dog. Or publish content, or like write a blog, or sell products and services of all kinds. Because they have powerful e-commerce functionality, like—ah! Websites sure have come a long way at everything.

Teresa: I know. I also like that I can go to ButtercupisaVeryGoodGirl.com on my mobile.

Travis: Yes! And using it on your phone, without any fancy anything! Um, and it's customizable templates make it not only easy to use, but fun and beautiful. And it's got built-in search engine optimization and analytics, and 24/7 award winning customer support. And I'll tell you this – you don't need to know anything about like coding or anything to be able to build your own website.

Teresa: Travis, do you know anything about coding?

Travis: I do not! At all!

Teresa: And you've built several websites at this point!

Travis: That is correct. I know nothing, and I have built websites!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: You heard it from me! So go to [Squarespace.com/Shmanners](https://www.squarespace.com/Shmanners) for a free trial, and when you're ready to launch, use the offer code "Shmanners" to save 10% off your first purchase of a website or domain.

Teresa: If Travis can do it, you can too!

Travis: That's their official slogan! That seems mean, but okay Squarespace! I expect some kind of commission.

Teresa: [laughs]

[a bell "ding" sounds, and music plays]

Singer: Is there a dog, in a car, at a bar, on the street?

Chorus: Yay!

Allegra: I'm Allegra Ringo, a small dog owner. My dog Pistachio howls when she's excited!

Renee: And I'm Renee Colvert, a big dog owner. My dog Tugboat tips over when he's sleepy.

Allegra: And we cohost a podcast called Can I Pet Your Dog that airs every Tuesday. We bring you all things dog.

Renee: Yes! Dog news, dog tech, dogs we met this week. We also have pretty famous guests on, but legs... We're not gonna let them talk about their projects.

Allegra: No.

Renee: Just wanna hear about those dogs!

Allegra: We don't wanna hear about your stuff. Only your dogs. So join us every Tuesday on MaxFun!

[music plays]

[hip-hop tune plays]

Speaker 1: I listen to Reading Glasses because Brea and Mallory have great tips.

Mallory: You're a comics reader, and you want to use a library-connected app, you can try out Hoopla.

Speaker 2: I listen for the author interviews.

Speaker 3: I'm mad at myself that I waited as long as I did to start reading Joan Didion.

Speaker 4: They give me reading advice I didn't even know I needed!

Mallory: If you go in person to an event and go up to an author or a filmmaker or anybody and tell them what you don't like about their work, you're a trash baby.

Brea: I—look, I understand you didn't like Heroes season three. That's fine.

Mallory: [laughs]

Brea: I like—I don't actually need to know that information. I'm Brea Grant.

Mallory: And I'm Mallory O'Mara.

Brea: We're Reading Glasses, and we solve all your bookish problems, every Thursday on Maximum Fun.

Travis: Okay, this question is from NerdPiggy, and I will say... of all the questions we got, and there were many... We got this one in—probably like, half of the questions we got were this question in some different form or another. “Is it okay to open a package slash bottle before paying for it, as long as the weight of it doesn't factor into cost? I've seen people doing this, especially with water bottles.”

We also got asked about like sampling the fruit before you buy it, or like if you're hungry... I will say, before Teresa even gets a chance to answer... no. Don't do this. And I'll tell you why. We should treat grocery stores like retail shops, right? And I've worked many retail stores.

And the fact of the matter is, you may have every intention of still paying for it, but like... that doesn't mean everybody does. And that doesn't mean that... it's just one of those things where, this is not about your specific intention or what you feel you are going to do with it. This is, as a greater rule, you should not open products in stores before you've paid for it.

Because, look at it this way – what if you take a drink of it and you're like, “Oh, actually I don't like this.” Are you still gonna pay for it? *You* might! But there will probably be people who wouldn't, and like... that's just not okay. Um—

Teresa: Um, can I—can I tell you... I have done this.

Travis: [shocked gasp]

Teresa: And I have only done it recently, when I have a toddler with me. Um, because sometimes, those goldfish just look too good...

Travis: What—

Teresa: And Bebe must have, and so, I have, on occasion, opened something for her to eat while we shop.

Travis: Listen... Here's the thing about this show, is when we give advice... Are there are circumstances in which you could do this? Yes, absolutely. Have I probably done it at some point in my life? Yes, definitely. But the thing is, is like if you're asking me, "Is it okay?" That's me—that sounds to me, like "Is it okay to do this all the time?"

No! No. But, is there a circumstance in which I could see this being necessary to do? Yes! Does it—like, if you do this, am I going to send you to prison?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: No... but I think that it's the kind of thing of like, only—like, "break glass in case of emergency" kind of deal.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Not like, yeah! Go ahead and start snacking as you walk through!

Teresa: So, as—as an offering, let me suggest... that um... if you find you need a drink while shopping, go and pay for that drink, and they can sometimes put a little sticker on it to let everybody know you've already paid for it. Um, and... absolutely, yes, pay for the things that you have opened, and I would say, mmm... probably not fresh produce.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Just because , it—it's a real bad look, um... and if it isn't ripe, you're gonna have to buy it, even though it's not ripe.

Travis: Yeah, this is the thing, it's like... [sighs] I know it's trickier, because—

Teresa: And then you can buy it and you can't even eat it!

Travis: That's the thing is, I know that this is tricky, 'cause like if you

bought a TV and you got it home, and opened it, and it was broken, you could return the TV. But if you buy a bunch of grapes and you take it home... And like, they're bad... you *could* return them, I have seen people return food at a grocery store before, but—

Teresa: You can! I have actually done it.

Travis: But I know that like, it's a lot harder to motivate yourself to do that?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: But like—

Teresa: You really need the fuel of anger to do it. [laughs]

Travis: Right. I—I think that, if you're asking me nine times out of ten, "Is it okay to do it?" No.

This question is from Shelby. "The thing where you're looking for something on the shelf, and when you locate it, there's someone in the way. 'Excuse me' should suffice, but I've been in situations where it didn't, and needed to repeat myself several times. Do I just stand there? What is the best way to do this?"

Teresa: Um... I think that uh, "excuse me" could mean, like, "I'm behind you," or many different things. This is a circumstance where I think you can say, specifically, "I need to grab that spaghetti sauce, and I'll be out of your way."

Travis: I will also say, that... listen, I'm a loud person. That should surprise no one. But still, there will become times where saying like, "excuse me," or something to get someone's attention... I open my mouth to speak, and I mean for it to come out as like a six out of ten...

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: And it comes out as like a one out of ten! For whatever reason, like I open my mouth, and it's just like, [quietly] "Excuse me..." And then like, it just gets stuck behind my teeth. So the question I would have, Shelby, is when you say excuse me, are you doing it just as barely loud as you think you need?

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: Are you saying, like a six out of ten, like, [moderately loud] "Excuse me." Because 'excuse me' doesn't necessarily mean like "you need to move," like you were saying.

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: It can also just be like, "I am here, and I'm grabbing this." 'Cause it's a communal space, the grocery store isn't a private thing for the person there, so you have just as every right to grab that as they do. Y'know, it's... you just have to make sure that your presence is known, I would say. Don't spook 'em, you know?

Teresa: [laughs] But like I said, I think it's important to be specific about what you need. Um, and to say, "I'm gonna grab this spaghetti sauce here, and get on out." Or something like that, so that people know what it is you're after.

Travis: This question is from Faith. "If I grab something from the shelf and decide later on when I'm checking out that I don't wanna purchase it anymore, is it rude to give it to the cashier? What do I do if I've already got the stuff scanned, and can't go to put it back myself?"

Teresa: That's what they want you to do.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Please *do* let the cashier know, "I don't want this product anymore." What they *don't* want you to do is like, stash it on a shelf somewhere.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Um, because—

Travis: And that—and even then, I will say, as someone who has worked in a warehouse for a retail thing, even people with the best intentions will put stuff back in the wrong place.

Teresa: Right. And we talked about this as far as like, libraries go, right?

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Um, if you... if you lose the place where the book is, it's better to give it to somebody who can put it back for you than it is to put it back in the wrong place. You mess up all kinds of things. You hide other, um, other goods, if you put that—if you put say, like a jar of... I don't know why spaghetti keeps coming to mind.

Travis: You like spaghetti, it's fun.

Teresa: I like spaghetti! If you put a jar of salsa in with the spaghetti sauce, it's, y'know... creates havoc. [laughs]

Travis: And here's the thing: it really does. Once again, I will say, we talked about like, carts increasing grocery prices. So there's this thing; it's called "loss," is the idea of it. And because it's not just like, things getting stolen or broken, a lot of it is also like, loss. And it's amazing, these—this day, with like, um, computers and scanners and everything, how like, specifically they have counts on stuff.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And say, if the system says you're supposed to have twenty cans of beans, and you can only find eighteen... Then you gotta count two of those as a loss, and that's like, money the grocery store loses, and to make up for that, they have to increase the cost of things. And so, trust me when I say

that the people who do the merchandising and do the stocking want you to hand it to the cashier.

Um, this question is from Brad. "When carts are crossing in an aisle intersection, who has the right of way?"

Teresa: Oh, boy... Let's say *ideally*, there would be enough room in an aisle for the two people to cross freely, without meeting.

Travis: Well, but if you're crossing at an intersection, right? So you're coming out of the... you know, uh... spaghetti aisle.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And then, the person who's like walking down the main aisle that crosses into them is coming... You know, like that kind of thing.

Teresa: I would say that the person with the clearest view of where they're going has the right of way.

Travis: Yes, I agree.

Teresa: So that, if we're talking about a T-intersection, where one of the carts is behind two shelves, on either side... they need to stop and wait until it's clear, because the person coming down the top of the aisles can't see that you're coming out.

Travis: Yes. I agree with you. I can't think of a clearer way to explain it, either. But if you're coming down an aisle, instead of across the aisles... No, across the aisles has right of—you know what I mean!

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Okay. Um, this is from Kate: "How many items is too many items to bring into self-checkout?" Now I'm assuming here, Kate, that they don't have a specific number listed.? A lot of places will say like, "12 or less."

Teresa: Right! Mm-hmm. Um... I think it's really up to you, because... I'm gonna—I'm gonna level. I hate the self-checkout.

Travis: Ugh, yes. I love it, but it depends. Hmm, okay.

Teresa: Mmm. Mmm, I hate it. Uh, even for two or three items, because first of all... please, I—[sighs] I don't wanna do that job. Somebody else do that job. I just wanna stand here. [laughs]

Travis: Oh but see, this is why—

Teresa: And the second—

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Second, I don't like the perceived pressure of now, the—the... um, the speed of the transaction is on me. And then the people behind me in line are actively chomping at the bit to get me off of that machine. Whereas, if I go in to a cashier's line, that's not my problem. They are going—the cashier is going as fast as they're gonna go, and I can just relax.

Travis: The difference between Teresa and I is that I am very bad at small talk, and I do not like it. And one of the places that that occurs and kind of affects me the most is grocery store check-out lines.

So I *do* like the—the self-checkout, but here's what I will say to you Kate, is I think that there are a couple factors you have to keep in mind, and one is how much you have. Like, and that's what you're asking, but like... is it like, twelve big things, or like, a hundred small things, you know what I mean? And I would say more than that, how busy is the store?

Teresa: Sure. Sure.

Travis: Like, that's the thing. If there's a line of people for self-checkout, that is nooot the time to do it. But, I do think that—so, um... let me move to a question... Uh, okay. So this question's from Desiree, "How do you feel

about asking to cut in line at checkout, if you only have one item?" Right? *That's* why the self-checkout...

Teresa: Exists.

Travis: Exists.

Teresa: That's why. Um, and as far as that goes, I think that... again, it's this kind of, like, social dance that we have, where it's perfectly acceptable to *offer* to someone, "You only have one thing, go ahead of me." Whereas, it's seen as a little kind of, um... I would say petulant?

Travis: Impatient?

Teresa: Impatient, there we go. To *ask* someone if you if you can go ahead. Now, again, there are—there *are* circumstances, I know! Absolutely. Um, but that's just kind of, like I said, the social dance of things. Um, I think that the—the way that you get around that is, you can, um... you can absolutely go ahead of someone if they offer it.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: But unless you truly, truly must leave the store with this item now, you probably shouldn't ask.

Travis: Well that's the thing, is like—once again, nine times out of ten kinda rule here, where like... you can ask, and they might glare at you or whatever, but you know, I—I also will say, if I was behind somebody and they were rolling up with like, three grocery carts full of stuff for like, a church potluck or whatever, like...

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And I needed two things, and it was the only line open? I would *definitely* ask. I would definitely be like, "Hey, do you mind?" Because they gotta say yes. It'll take you three minutes to go through the checkout. But you know, it's that kind of—but if you have ten items and they have twelve items, like... no.

Teresa: Right. Um, and following back to the other question, I don't know if we ever truly answered it, but the answer is... unless there's a posted amount, as much as you can stand. [laughs]

Travis: Yeah. I—within reason, like... Oh! Oh, but here is one important thing... And maybe this is different other places, but I don't believe it is – you can't do alcohol at a self-checkout.

Teresa: Oh!

Travis: Just an important thing to keep in mind, so you don't get stuck there. And so that's kind of one of my rules, is like if I have a bunch of like dry-good boxes, where I'm just scanning things. But like if I have a cart full of like, fresh produce, where I'm gonna have to look up all the different codes and everything?

Teresa: Yeah! That's another thing I don't like.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: About the self-checkout.

Travis: And then—then that kind of slows it down, if I—if I have anything in my cart where I'm like, "This is gonna make it tricky for me to go through this", then I don't do it.

Um, one last question here. This is uh, from Emily. "If I'm shopping for deli meats/cheeses, how many samples is an appropriate amount to try?" And this—I'm gonna separate this into two, because... Emily, you could be asking... they have samples like, set on a plate, or, "I think I'm gonna get that, could I try a little bit of it before I buy it?"

Teresa: Right. Um, so as far as like, the samples out on a plate, one sample per customer.

Travis: Per type.

Teresa: Per item.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Right. So, if they have... you could take—If they have six different cheeses, you could take one of each cheese from the tray, right? Um... but as far as like, tasting from like, the deli—the deli worker? Uh, usually, that's because they ask you like, how thick you want your—I don't know, your ham cut or whatever. Um, and they'll give you a sample size of the slice. I think that if you—if you... try it, and you don't like it, you can try one more time.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Um, and then obviously, if you do like it, stop. [laughing]

Travis: Yeah. And that—

Teresa: 'Cause that's what you should get, and—and not sample everything from the case, just to find out that you like all of them.

Travis: And I think it's the same with cheese. Like, if you want to try, like, a new kind of cheese, and like, someone said like, "Hey, get some whatever!" And you've never tried it before, and you want it—like, say, "Would it be alright to try it?" But... yeah. One other one.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And then... and then just call it a day. [laughs] Like, cause—

Teresa: 'Cause this—'cause this is a grocery store, not a restaurant!
[laughs]

Travis: Right. Uh, so that's gonna do it us. Thank you so much for listening. We're gonna be back next week, I promise. But, I wanna plug something from a completely different show. Well first, go to McElroyMerch.com and we have some really cute, like uh, Shamnners pins.

Teresa: Oh, yeah!

Travis: Uh, designed by Kate Leth, and like, t-shirts and stuff. They're really cute, and I really love them. They're the "Hello Dear, Hello My Dove" stuff. It's really great. But also, book two of The Adventure Zone graphic novel is uh, up for preorder now!

Teresa: Woohoo!

Travis: If you go to TheAdventureZoneComic.com, you can get it there. Also, we are creating a McElroy newsletter, and it'll have information about Shmanners, And My Brother My Brother and Me, Sawbones, uh all those different things, and you can go to bit.ly/mcelroymail, all lowercase, M-A-I-L. Of course, I don't know if I need to—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Anyways, McElroy Mail, bit.ly/mcelroymail. And speaking of Sawbones, the Sawbones book is available for purchase now! It's out!

Teresa: I have read it. I did enjoy it.

Travis: It's so good! Very funny, very cute, uh, and very informative. You can go to bit.ly/sawbonesbook and get it there, or just like search for it on Amazon or whatever, and listen... This is just a little personal uh, aside from me, your friend Travis.

I am so very proud of Justin and Sydnee and Teylor for their work on this book. They have been working on it for... I don't know, forever, and putting so much work into it, and I'm very proud of them. So please support them and go to bit.ly/sawbonesbook.

Um, what else, Teresa?

Teresa: Well, as always, we'd like to thank Brent "Brental Floss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are

sold. Um, also thank you to Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art. Uh, check out her portfolio. And thank you to Keely Weis Photography for the picture of the—the banner picture. Banner? Cover?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: There it is. Cover picture, for our fan-run Facebook group Shmanners Fanners, which you should join! There are a lot of really polite, happy people on there.

Travis: Um, and before we forget, go check out all the other amazing shows on MaximumFun.org! They're all great, and I guarantee you will like them!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Uh, so that's gonna do it for us! 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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