

Shmanners 231: Pumpkins

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Travis: What did the surprised pumpkin say?

Teresa: I don't know.

Travis: "Oh my gourd!"

Teresa: [chuckles] 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, my dear.

Travis: What'd you think of that joke?

Teresa: I thought it was pretty good.

Travis: You wanna hear the other one?

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: That I was gonna use? Okay.

Teresa: Yeah, mm-hmm.

Travis: Um, how is the pumpkin's Halloween?

Teresa: I don't know, how?

Travis: Smashing.

Teresa: Mm-hmm-hmm. I figured that one out.

Travis: Yeah, but that one wasn't as good as "Oh my gourd."

Teresa: Gourd. Oh my gourd, oh my God, you're—gourd—gourd, you guys. That's hard.

Travis: Yeah. Hi, everybody! So... it's the autumnal season.

Teresa: It sure is. It's fall, y'all!

Travis: It's fall, y'all!

Teresa: Sweater weather!

Travis: Sweater weather. Well, here.

Teresa: Are you—are you just repeating everything I say?

Travis: Well, you're saying it with such passion.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: It's in—it's infectious.

Teresa: Hmm.

Travis: Um, here—I should say here in the Midwest, it's sweater weather.

Teresa: It is.

Travis: This is something... [sighs] I constantly have to remind myself that not everyone experiences the same weather. And listen, I don't mean, "Oh, if it's cold here it should be cold in California."

I mean that, like, it's fall here, so that means it's spring in, like, Australia.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Right? And that's, uh, weird, and unnatural.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: [laughs] Except the exact opposite. It's very natural.

Teresa: It's very natural. It's the way of the world.

Travis: So we're talking about pumpkins.

Teresa: We are.

Travis: Why?

Teresa: Well, because it is October.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Uh, and like you said, here in the Midwest, it's pun'kin season!

Travis: It is pun'kin season. Let me ask you a question.

Teresa: You made a pumpkin beer.

Travis: I did make a pumpkin beer. I call it "history of the gourd: part one."

Teresa: Hmm.

Travis: Now, let me ask you several questions.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: I'm gonna do a little table setting.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: First, when you think of pumpkins, just smash, bam, what's the first thing that pops into your head?

Teresa: Pumpkin pie.

Travis: Pumpkin pie! Okay! I do think of pumpkin beer, but if I picture it in my head, the first thing that pops in my head is, uh, *Sleepy Hollow*.

Teresa: Ohh.

Travis: The pumpkin head on the thing. Which—I don't even know if that's, like, part of the actual story, but it's the Disney, like, *The Adventures of Ichabod Crane* or whatever it's called.

Teresa: Oh yeah.

Travis: I always picture that pumpkin. Now, here's my second question. How do you say the word?

Teresa: [enunciates carefully] Pumpkin.

Travis: You hit—you don't hit that "P"!

Teresa: I—yes I—

Travis: You just did it 'cause I just asked!

Teresa: No, no, no. Uh, let's see.

Travis: Pum—pum—pumpkins.

Teresa: Um, pumpkins. Pumpkins. Pumpkin.

Travis: Now, I say "poomkeen!" [laughs]

Teresa: [through laughter] You do not.

Travis: No, but I asked because, like, you know, there's people who say, like, "pun'kin." Pun'kin pie. Um, which I think is adorable and fun. I have no problem with that. Listen. You're not gonna find, in me, any animosity towards folksiness. I'm from West Virginia, went to school in Oklahoma.

Teresa: You've had trouble with enunciating.

Travis: Very true. So if someone wants to say "pun'kin," or, like, "warsh," who am I—

Teresa: I think warsh is a New England thing, isn't it? Do they say warsh in West Virginia?

Travis: Well, it's very—it's very Oklahoma. It's Oklahoma., yeah.

Teresa: Ohh, Oklahoma. Ohh.

Travis: And—and "might do," is another one I enjoy.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: "Are you gonna go to the store?"

"Might do."

That's a good one. That's just a fun one. So, you can say pumpkin however you want. Just don't say poomkeen! [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs] 'Cause that's weird.

Travis: Poomkeen does sound like a character from, like, almost a Pusheen-esque—

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: —like, a cutesy pumpkin, you know?

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Travis: "I'm Poomkeen!" [laughs]

Teresa: Yeah. Um, I do have to say—

Travis: I see you're getting less and less amused by poomkeen every time I say it.

Teresa: Yeah, every time. Um... here's—here's a secret. It's like that Whisper app where you can, like, whisper your secrets into the app.

Travis: Are you gonna whisper a secret?

Teresa: I am.

Travis: Whisper.

Teresa: [whispering] I hate. Carving. Pumpkins.

Travis: Now, let's clarify. Why do you hate it?

Teresa: Because I don't like scoopin' the goop.

Travis: You think it's gross.

Teresa: I don't like pumpkin guts! I don't like the way it smells, I don't like the way it feels, I don't like it. I don't like it. So I don't.

Travis: Is it a visceral thing?

Teresa: Uh—

Travis: Or is it just, like... "I don't like the idea." Is it, like—

Teresa: It makes me want to puke. Is that visceral?

Travis: Yes, that's very vi—

Teresa: Yes, okay.

Travis: I would say that is *very* visceral. Okay.

Teresa: Yeah. Um, because I don't—I don't do it. I don't like it. I'm an adult, and I don't have to.

Travis: Okay. So, let me ask you this, Teresa. What have we done to avoid that while still getting into the Halloween spirit?

Teresa: Uh, we buy... carvable foam pumpkins!

Travis: Now, that's generous, because I would say most of the time we buy carvable foam pumpkins, but sometimes your husband buys pumpkins which he assumes are carvable, because anything's carvable if you push hard enough.

Teresa: [through laughter] If you try hard enough. [laughs] They're—they're normally hollow on the inside, and, like, it's got maybe an inch or so—two inches or so of foam.

Travis: And—okay. Here's—ugh. This—I feel like is a big spoiler, 'cause we'll talk about this more in the questions, but the benefits of this... one: no mess. Two: keep 'em! Year to year, they don't go bad. Three: you're not wasting food. Uh, four: you don't have to worry about bugs. Lots of—lots of—you can't—they're really hard to smash.

Teresa: They never rot.

Travis: If you jump up and down on 'em, I guess you could smash 'em. But why would somebody do that to my *Bob's Burgers* pumpkin?

Teresa: I know, right?

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So, yes.

Travis: [holding back laughter] What's the history of a pumpkin?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: When did a pumpkin first grow?

Teresa: Alright.

Travis: In the garden of Eden?

Teresa: Uh, no. They—the oldest pumpkin seeds were discovered by archaeologists in the Osaka highlands of Mexico.

Travis: Oh!

Teresa: Um, and so, this gourd is said to have originated in Central America over 7500 years ago.

Travis: That's way older than me.

Teresa: Although, if you were to see one of those, it wouldn't look like a pumpkin that we know today.

Travis: No, I assume not. No. I assume that the popularity of jack-o'-lanterns led to people specifically cultivating a round shaped, ri—you know, like, the pumpkin we picture when we think of pumpkins. Because really, pumpkins come in all kinds of colors, shapes, and sizes, right?

Teresa: They absolutely do, and these early pumpkins were very small and hard and pretty bitter.

Travis: And they had terrible personalities.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Oh, so grumpy, all the ti—" [gruff mocking voice] Uh, I'm a pump— yeah, oh, what're you gonna do, cut my top off? [grumbles]"

Teresa: Well, they were notoriously hardy. Um, so they would be kept over winter, so you could continue to eat them.

Travis: Oh. And, I mean, I assume at that point you would want something with, like... thicker flesh. Eugh. I don't like the way that sounded.

Teresa: More bang for your buck.

Travis: Yeah, so that way you could, like, bake it. 'Cause you're not eatin' pumpkin raw, you know?

Teresa: I mean, you would throw it on the fire, basically.

Travis: Yeah, you roast it.

Teresa: Um, and it was traditionally eaten as a savory food. Now, we think—we think of pumpkins as kind of a sweet thing, right? Pumpkin lattes, pumpkin pie...

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Things like that. But—

Travis: Pumpkin roll.

Teresa: It was—

Travis: Pumpkin cookie.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Pumpkin... [chokes]

Teresa: Aww!

Travis: Gum? [laughs] That isn't even a thing!

Teresa: [through laughter] Gross! No. But it was eaten more like you would, like, a squash bake or potatoes, right?

Travis: Do you think—was that because it was—well, you said it was more bitter back then. That was probably why. Because now, I think of it in the same category as, like, sweet potato and carrot.

Teresa: Exactly. And that didn't start happening until, like, the 1670s. Um, so the first American pumpkin recipes were written in New England, and it describes a side dish made from diced ripe pumpkin that had been cooked down over a full day.

Travis: Oh, wow. Okay.

Teresa: Yeah. So then, you would cook it and mix it with butter and spices to create a lot like the mashed sweet potato business that we like.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, during the rest of the 17th century—

Travis: How do you like your sweet potatoes? You like your sweet potatoes with the marshmallows on top, or with the crunched up nuts?

Teresa: Crunched up nuts.

Travis: That is correct.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Good answer.

Teresa: Um, so during the 17th century, people worked to develop new and tasty ways to serve this pumpkin. Um, because again, pumpkins... if you don't cut into a pumpkin, it lasts a long time.

Travis: Right, right, right.

Teresa: Um, so pumpkin pie showed up on the scene in the 1800s.

Travis: [makes sound of kicking a door open] "Hey, everybody. I'm pumpkin pie. Hi. Nice to meetcha. Who wants a picture?"

That's him showing up on the scene.

Teresa: But it's not—it wasn't quite—it wasn't quite a pie.

Travis: Oh?

Teresa: I mean, Paul Hollywood would not say it was a pie.

Travis: What would he say?

Teresa: Um, he—

Travis: And how would he say it?

Teresa: [laughs] No.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Are you worried that your British accent will be offensive? 'Cause that's bad—if your British accent is offensive—

Teresa: No. I just—he's—he has a very distinctive Northern accent.

Travis: [simultaneously] [imitating Paul Hollywood] It's over-baked. No. It's overworked. Over—don't eat that Mary. It's overworked. [leaning towards Arnold Schwarzenegger?] I'm Paul Hollywood. [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs] Alright.

Travis: [imitating Arnold Schwarzenegger] I'll be back. [laughs]

Teresa: So what they would do is they would, um, scoop out the pumpkin shell and fill it with, like, a gingery spiced milk, and then roast it. Um, and this is how they called it pie, because it was, like, a filled gourd.

Travis: Ohh. So it was baked just right in there, right inside the pumpkin.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Yes. Um, but we've only really been talking about our hemisphere, as far as pumpkins go. But, um, the Greeks loved pumpkins. And also, Shakespeare mentions pumpkins in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Um, and, like you said, it appears in *Sleepy Hollow*, in *Cinderella*, in *Peter Peter Pumpkin Eater*. Like, it's a worldwide phenom.

[pause]

Travis: I'm looking up—just so you know, I'm not ignoring you. I'm looking up *Peter Peter Pumpkin Eater* to see what it really means.

Teresa: Ohh, okay.

Travis: 'Cause it just popped into my head. 'Cause you talked about putting it in a pumpkin shell.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And that reminded me that *Peter Peter Pumpkin Eater*, had a wife but could not keep her. There—uh, put her in a pumpkin shell, and there he kept her very well. What does that mean?!

[pause]

Teresa: Anyway. So, here is a fun little ditty. Not a song. What do I mean—a story. I'm gonna tell you a story. Story about the legend of the jack-o'-lantern.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So. Um, here it is. It is an Irish story, and there—it goes, "There was an Irish miser named Stingy Jack."

Travis: Well, I mean, if you're named Stingy Jack, you're not gonna be generous, are you?

Teresa: Nope. Who invited the devil to have a drink with him. Um, but, uh, he really only did this because he wanted to get the devil to pay for his drinks.

Travis: Oh, sure, sure.

Teresa: Um, Jack convinced the devil to turn himself into a coin, and Jack would use that coin to buy the drinks, then the devil would change back, and then they would've gotten free drinks.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Right?

Travis: Sure, sure, sure.

Teresa: But...

Travis: Oh!

Teresa: Instead, Jack pocketed the coin, um, and he had a silver cross in that same pocket, which prevented the devil from changing back. The devil was upset, it would seem. I would be, too. Um—

Travis: I mean, yeah!

Teresa: —and Jack said that he would let him free if the devil didn't bother him for one more year, and if he died, the devil would make sure that Jack's soul would not go to hell.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And the devil agreed, because he wanted to get out of the pocket.

Travis: Sure, sure, sure.

Teresa: And a year later, the devil comes and is like, "Time to pay the pauper!" Right? And Jack was still schemin'.

Travis: Oh, that Jack.

Teresa: Still schemin'. So, what he said was, uh, "Before I go, can you go get me some fruit from my tree? It's my final wish."

Travis: The devil is pretty—

Teresa: "Last wish!"

Travis: —pretty, uh, accommodating.

Teresa: And, uh, that—that devil, that poor devil... somehow, he—that was convincing enough for the devil. Um, and then he climbed up the tree to get the fruit, and Jack carved a cross into the tree to keep the devil from coming back down.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And he wouldn't let him down until he made him promise that he wouldn't bother Jack for ten more years.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And I agree with you, Alex, in writing this story. Her aside is, "Why is he not just telling the devil to leave him alone forever?" [laughs]

Travis: Yeah. Very true.

Teresa: Right? And why does the devil keep coming back? He's gonna die eventually!

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Alright. Jack dies. Duh. Because everybody does.

Travis: What?! [pause] Go on.

Teresa: And the devil kept his promise. His soul didn't go to hell, but God was like, "Uh-uh, no you didn't," when he got up to the pearly gates, because he was Stingy Jack. He hadn't exactly led a good life.

Travis: Right, right, right.

Teresa: Right?

Travis: Mm-hmm. Let that be a lesson to you stingy people.

Teresa: Well, and if it's all on—on works, that's what happens.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Um, so then, having nowhere to go, the devil cast Jack off into the dark night with only a coal to light his way. And I guess since the coal still hurts your hand even if you're a ghost, he put—Jack put the coal in a carved-out turnip.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Um, and so—

Travis: [having an epiphany] And it was his lantern! It was Jack's lantern!

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: It was the lantern of Jack! Oh my goodness!

Teresa: The Jack-O'-Lantern. Jack of the lantern?

Travis: [gasps]

Teresa: Jack-o'-lantern.

Travis: [gasps]

Teresa: Alright.

Travis: It's—it's all so clear!

Teresa: Now, the reason that we do this on Halloween is because it is—it's widely believed that the veil between this world and the next is very thin on that day, right? Um, and so, people began to make their own versions of the lantern by carving scary faces into turnips or potatoes and placing them in the windows and doors to frighten away Stingy Jack, and other wandering evil spirit things.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Um, and so in England, people started to use these, as, like—they would use the bigger ones, right? And leave them near doors and windows and chimneys and stuff, and this tradition came with immigrants to the United States, and they discovered that pumpkins were not only the perfect canvas to make their jack-o'-lanterns, they were wide and easy to carve, and also lasted a long time.

Travis: Longer than a turnip, I imagine.

Teresa: Yes. Much longer.

Travis: Now, let me say, in all that, and I did find out something about *Peter Peter Pumpkin Eater*, which I'll tell you in a second, but... I am jealous, slightly, of Dia de los Muertos versus Halloween.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Because with Halloween, it's all about, like, "Oh, the dead spirits! We've gotta scare 'em away." That's why we put on costumes to go trick or treating. It's why we put out pumpkins, all of that.

Where Dia de los Muertos is like, "Hey! It's time to celebrate with the dead, our loved ones." And it's all about, like, leavin' stuff out for them, right? And, like, chilling with the dead, 'cause they're cool and we miss 'em. That seems way better to me than, like, people—we're all scared of the spirits and the evil. Oh no!

Teresa: Right.

Travis: It seems very puritanical. Let's be afraid of the devil, and be afraid of the things and the witches and the evil. Versus, like, "Hey, the dead are pretty cool, huh? Think of all the cool things we could learn from them."

Teresa: There is one of those, in—in Catholic doctrine. November 1st is All Saints' Day.

Travis: Uh, Dia de los Muertos is a better name.

Teresa: Well...

Travis: They could work on their branding. All Saints' Day? That's not good branding. I mean—okay—

Teresa: But if we're gonna talk about benevolent spirits, right? So the night All—All Hallows Eve, right? Is October 31st, and that's for the baddies. And then the good day is the next day, November 1st.

Travis: Yeah, but All Saints' Day sounds, no pun intended, preachy. You know? It doesn't sound like a fun day. Where Dia de los Muertos seems fun.

Teresa: I guess not.

Travis: It's a fun day. Alright. I'm gonna tell you about *Peter Peter Pumpkin Eater*, but first, how about a thank you note for our sponsors?

[theme music plays]

Travis: We want to write a thank you note to Stitch Fix. Not just for sponsoring the show in part this week, but also because it has gotten our looks together. Wouldn't you love it if every clothing store you shopped at already understood your loves, hates, and total no-go zones? Well, there's a company focused on making that happen.

Stitch Fix is a personal styling company that's dedicated to helping you find clothes that you will love every time. To get started, go to stitchfix.com/shmanners to set up your profile for looks personalized just for you, in your colors, styles, and budget. You pay a \$20 styling fee for each fix, which is credited towards anything you keep. Schedule at any time. There is no subscription required. Plus, shipping, returns, and exchanges are easy and free.

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Listen, folks. I'm gonna be honest with you. I'm an adult. This is true. But I still have problems with acne. And not just that, you know, I get clogged pores. Uh, and then I—I've tried things in the past to try to deal with that, and it just ends up drying out my skin. But not with Curology.

I've been using Curology now for a couple weeks. I have noticed significant decrease in breakouts and clogged pores, and the formula they came up with for me does not dry out my skin.

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Speaker One: Macho Man to the top rope!

[thump]

Speaker One: A flying elbow! The cover!

[wrestling sound effects in the background]

[bell rings]

Speaker One: We've got a new champion!

[music plays]

Speaker Two: We're here with Macho Man Randy Savage after his big win to become the new world champion! What are you gonna do now, Mach?

Speaker Three: [Macho Man impression] I'm gonna go listen to the newest episode of the *Tights and Fights* podcast, oh yeah.

Speaker Two: Tell us more about this podcast!

Speaker Three: It's the podcast of power, too sweet to be sour, funky like a monkey, woke discussions, man! *And* jokes about wrestlers fashion choices, myself excluded, yeah.

Speaker Two: I can't wait to listen!

Speaker Three: Neither can I! You can find it Saturdays on Maximum Fun! Oh yeah, dig it!

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Travis: Okay. So, here's what I found. Uh, in—in my three minutes of Googling.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: So, they're at—the—the caveat here is that with things like this, this is from, like, the 18th century, 1800s, one of those two...

Teresa: [wheeze-laughs]

Travis: Um, and so the chances of it being like, this is the correct interpretation are slim. But what I found that makes sense is that... ugh. Basically, when it says that he had a wife but could not keep her, she was unfaithful. And so—

Teresa: Ohhh.

Travis: —when he put her in a pumpkin's shell, the pumpkin shell was a poor man's chastity belt.

Teresa: Wooow.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: That is not what I expected at all!

Travis: I know. That's what I found, and I'm like, "Okay."

Teresa: I thought he was, like—couldn't afford building materials for a house. "Hey, look at this great pumpkin, let's live in there! It lasts a long time."

Travis: Well, that's not what I found!

Teresa: Oh boy.

Travis: What I found, uh, was that the pumpkin shell was used as a chastity belt.

Teresa: Hmm.

Travis: Hmm.

Teresa: Hmm.

Travis: Hmmm!

Teresa: I like mine better.

Travis: I mean, yeah. It's definitely more pleasant! I would not want to wear a pumpkin as undergarments. Oh ho ho, can you imagine? Oh boy.

Teresa: I mean, especially—I mean, I don't like scoopin' out pumpkins, so I wouldn't want it—

Travis: Let alone havin' one about your nethers. Oh boy.

Teresa: Oookay. Next.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Pumpkins have become more and more popular, resulting in over 1.5 *billion*, with a B, pounds of pumpkin being sold in the US every year, at thousands of pumpkin patches and carving competitions and other sorts of competitions, all over the country.

Speaking of competitions, there's a Guinness Book of World Record holder named Benny Meier in Germany who grew the heaviest pumpkin, at... 2,323.7 pounds, on October 12th, 2014.

Travis: That pumpkin weighs over a ton. That...

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: ... is a—and I'm sorry for exaggerating, but that is a large pumpkin.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: I would say—you know what? I'll go so far as to say *quite* large.

Teresa: Yes, yes, indeed.

Travis: Like, if I saw that pumpkin, I think I would be like, "Whoa. Oh my gourd."

Teresa: [wheezes]

Travis: "That's a big pumpkin."

Teresa: You got me. You got me again.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: You got me again.

Travis: I know.

Teresa: Alright. Let's—hey, let's talk about some pumpkin etiquette.

Travis: Please!

Teresa: First, let's talk about the pumpkin patch.

Travis: The pumpkin patch.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Where the pumpkins live, and the Great Pumpkin ascends, every Halloween.

Teresa: Indeed.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: And leaves presents? Is that what happens?

Travis: I can't remember.

Teresa: Does the Great Pumpkin leave presents? Or candy?

Travis: Here's the thing that they never address in this. Where are Linus's parents in all this, to be like, "Hey. Please don't go sit out in the pumpkin patch all night. Please go trick or treating. It's cold out there."

Teresa: "And you're a child."

Travis: "And you're a child. There is—I don't know where you got the idea—"

Teresa: Oh, wait a minute. Wait a minute. They wouldn't sound like that. Because—

Travis: "Wah wah wah... [through laughter] wah wah wah."

Teresa: "Wah wah wah wah wah." [laughs]

Travis: No, no, no. Okay, honey—

Teresa: Maybe that's why. They can't understand 'em.

Travis: Hey, this is important to me that you know this.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: They don't really sound like that. That's just what they sound like to the kids.

Teresa: [laughs quietly]

Travis: You know this, right? This isn't an alternate dimension universe in which you turn 18 and suddenly your voice goes, "Wah wah—oh! [distressed] Wah wah wah wah!" [laughs] You know that, right?

Teresa: Their perception is their reality.

Travis: Oh boy. Okay. Okay. "Wah wah wah."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "Wah wah wah wah wah wah."

Teresa: Alright. So, pumpkin patch. Um, this year, be especially careful, and look up the rules online before you go.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Most of these places are working farms, um, and they have specific hours, they have specific entrances, they have—I mean, all this kind of stuff. Do your research before you go.

Travis: And social distance—I wish I didn't have to tell you this at this point, folks, but wear a mask.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Social distance. Don't, like, paw the pumpkins over and over again if you're not gonna buy 'em. You know what I mean?

Teresa: [laughs] Um, be careful not to run in the pumpkin patch, because pumpkins grow on vines. Um, and so, you might trip. You might, uh, land face first in a raw pumpkin, and that would hurt a lot. And, you destroy the merchandise. [laughs]

Travis: Yeah. Yep, yep, yep.

Teresa: Also, if you're going to take pictures, try not, if you are an adult, to sit on pumpkins. Uh, that's another way that a lot of merchandise gets ruined. Um, children usually are, what? 20, 40 pounds? Somewhere in there. Um, but adults should refrain from sitting on pumpkins to take pictures. Um, again, wear closed-toed shoes.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: It's—it's fall-ish, right? So you would probably wear closed-toed shoes or, you know, at least, like, boot-type deal to walk around in a field. But again, this is a safety thing, right? Um, it's outside on the field, and the vines and the sticks and the rocks and the pumpkins are there, obviously, so you want to be safe.

Travis: And you don't want one of those to bite you. [laughs quietly]

Teresa: [laughs] Okay. Uh, and finally, once you pick your pumpkin, don't carry it by the stem. Again, this is a way to ruin your merchandise, um, because the heavy part is underneath, so carry it under the gourd... part.

Travis: Can I give some pumpkin carving tips?

Teresa: Oh, sure!

Travis: Okay. First: don't cut off the top to put the candle in. Cut off the bottom. That way, you set the candle on the bottom, you put it on top. It's way smarter. Do that.

Teresa: I like to cut a hand-sized hole in the back so that I can put the pumpkin down and slide a candle—or, I mean, we use electric tea lights—slide those in.

Travis: Yes. That's the other thing. Use electric tea lights. Uh, so that you're not risking fire or burning yourself in doing it.

Teresa: Or covering your pumpkin with soot. Bleh.

Travis: Yeah, also that. There are some really great ones that we got this year that are, like, specifically pumpkin lights, and glow with, like, an orange glow, and you can even set 'em to flicker. They're great.

Now, if you use fake pumpkins—and you could do this with the real pumpkins, too. But, uh—and this is only if you use electric lights. Don't do this if you're using, like, actual flame. But put some, like, parchment paper over the parts that you've carved. That way, it'll disperse the light better, and light up the whole thing instead of just, like, a little light at the bottom trying to light up the whole pumpkin.

Teresa: Yep.

Travis: Um, let's see what else. Uh, hand sanitizer removes sharpie marks on pumpkins.

Teresa: It sure does. So if you plan our your pumpkin design with the sharpie, you can just wipe it off with the hand sanitizer.

Travis: And listen, there are some people out there who will, like, bleach a pumpkin to try to get it to stay alive better, I guess, or whatever. Don't do that, because then if you have some livestock, if you got some deer that come through or whatever, or squirrels even who go to eat that, they'll get really sick. Don't do this.

Teresa: Yeah. Speaking of getting sick, um, you need to make sure that if you are carving an actual pumpkin, that you are careful of pets in the area. Now, pumpkin is notoriously actually very good for animals.

Travis: Notoriously?

Teresa: No—reportedly.

Travis: Famously.

Teresa: Famously.

Travis: There we go.

Teresa: There it is. That's what I want. Um—

Travis: "Don't eat that!"

"Why not?"

"It's notoriously good for you." [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs] But... any animals with chronic illness like diabetes or kidney disease, it might not be okay, and they should never have the seeds.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Uh, speaking of... food eating, of the pumpkin—

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Oh, man. [laughs quietly]

Travis: Sure, sure. Yeah yeah yeah.

Teresa: I've only had two sips of my coffee. Um, it can be an allergen.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: Um, so always, you know, be aware, uh, because I assumed that it was an allergy-free food, but it's not.

Travis: Uh, speaking of allergies, I want to mention the teal pumpkin thing.

Teresa: Oh great, yeah, let's talk about that.

Travis: Um, so, as you are trick or treating, which maybe this year is not happening. Uh, maybe you're finding creative ways to do it without putting yourself or your children or your neighbors at risk. Cool. But if you have found a way—I saw somebody who, like, built a candy slide that was six feet long.

Teresa: Yeahhh, a little chute.

Travis: Great, brilliant. Um, but if you see some teal pumpkins around, it is a sign that that house is offering non-food-based treats like, uh—say, like, light-up bracelets or, you know, puzzles or whatever.

Teresa: Stickers!

Travis: Sure. So that kids with food allergies can still trick or treat, right?

Teresa: Or, I mean, any kind of, like, reason that they can't have candy.

Travis: Sure, sure. Um, you know, think about all the stuff that is—peanuts, coconut—I mean, even chocolate. Even stuff like that can be bad for kids. And you know what? There are some kids who can't have sugar. There are some kids who can't have that stuff, and you want them to be able to participate as well. So, putting out that teal pumpkin says, like, "Hey, you can come trick or treat here, too."

Teresa: And I have one final, uh, trick or treat thing... uh, advice. There we go.

Travis: Okay, sure.

Teresa: I think that it's important that especially this year—and for all the years after this, let's make a promise to each other.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: That anyone who comes to the door gets candy.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Whether they are—they may, quote, be "too old," right? Or if they aren't wearing a fancy costume, or if they don't say "Trick or treat," or all that kind of stuff. Whoever—whoever comes—

Travis: You don't know what's going on in somebody's life. Maybe they can't afford a fancy costume. Maybe they had to make it themselves 'cause their parents work all the time. Maybe they're—they can't afford to buy candy in their home, so yeah, they're teenagers, but they're gettin' it 'cause they need it. Maybe it's a parent trick or treating for their kid who can't come out 'cause they're sick. Maybe—

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Yeah. There's a hundred reasons why. Don't judge people. Just give 'em candy! That's what the day's about.

Teresa: Everybody gets candy.

Travis: There's very little that Halloween is actually about.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: When you get right down to it. Alright. We have a couple questions.

Teresa: Alright, I'm ready.

Travis: This is from Kay. "How to choose the best pumpkin at a pumpkin patch."

Alright. Here's what you need to know. One—and I think this is the most important—have a design in your head when you go. Right?

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: If—or—let me rephrase. If you have a design in your head when you go, pick a pumpkin that matches that.

Teresa: Ah, there it is.

Travis: If you don't, pick a pumpkin, and then let it inspire you.

Teresa: Yeah! Also, a pumpkin really only needs to be perfect on one side.

Travis: True.

Teresa: So if you find a pumpkin that has maybe a nice round side, and then, like, kind of a—like a lighter or maybe a green, flat side, it's only gonna face one way. Pumpkins are not, like, a 3D experience. You look at 'em from one side.

Travis: Correct. This is from Worm Writes. Nice.

"Is it appropriate or is inappropriate to make an excessive amount of jack-o'-lanterns to flex my carving skills? Assume all pumpkins will be displayed on the lawn."

I think that's fine, but I would recommend in that case, the, uh, foam carvable pumpkins.

Teresa: Right, yes.

Travis: Uh, it's just not as wasteful, and you can use 'em over and over again and start building up, like, a real collection.

Teresa: Yeah, so that your, uh—your masterpiece won't have to be restarted every year. You can add to them and make it bigger and bigger.

Travis: Now, a lot of people asked about what to do if you want to carve a real pumpkin, which we're not shaming you if you do. Um, what to do so you don't feel wasteful?

Teresa: Okay. Well, *some* people enjoy the pulp. Uh—[laughs]

Travis: [incredulously] Huh?!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Monsters! No.

Teresa: As an additive to stock and soup, and things like that. Um, the seeds also, once removed of the pulp, can be roasted and eaten. Um, but the thing is, the part where you really make, like, the food of the pumpkin, is the wall of the pumpkin, right?

So you're not really gonna be, like, scraping that off, because you're gonna be carving through it. You know what I mean? Um, so you can let that, uh—let that mature outside for the animals. Somebody'll eat it.

Travis: Here's some other options that I looked up. One: if it's cold enough outside, carve your pumpkin the morning of Halloween, the morning of trick or treat, right? And then, after trick or treat, cut it up and roast it.

Teresa: Great!

Travis: Right? Other option. Uh, bury it once you're done with it, and let it become compost. You don't even have to put it in a compost pile if you don't want to. You can just bury it and let the worms and the dirt and everything reclaim it. Um, you can cut off the top of it and turn it into a hanging bird feeder. Squirrels will eat it. You could put birdseed in it, all that stuff. Um...

Teresa: You might be able to turn it into, like, a planter ball or whatever, if you wanna bury it and then plant, like, a bush inside it.

Travis: Sure, sure, sure. There you go. There's some things so you don't feel wasteful.

Uh, let's see. One more question. "Can I leave pumpkins—" this is from NerdKate88. "Can I leave pumpkins out until Thanksgiving, as long as they're still in good shape, or should I toss them on November 1st? Is the rule different for jack-o'-lanterns? Basically, how much mileage can I get out of my pumpkin decor?"

Teresa: I would say you absolutely can leave any gourd as decoration through Thanksgiving. Um—

Travis: It's all fall, y'all.

Teresa: It's all fall, y'all. And then, um, jack-o'-lanterns... I would say, as long as they're in good shape, you could leave them out, but I wouldn't worry about lighting them past Halloween, trick or treat business.

Travis: Yeah, yeah. I guess it also kind of depends on how you carve it, you know?

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: If you carve it with, like, super spooky, like... I've done a really realistic—it looks like the pumpkin is vomiting pumpkin seeds or whatever. That might not be Thanksgiving-appropriate. But if it's, like, smiling, one tooth, triangle eye jack-o'-lantern, that's fine. That's pleasant.

Teresa: Yeah! Or, you know, a harvest scene. I've seen—oh. One of the best pumpkins I've seen was, like—

Travis: Is the *Bob's Burgers* one I carved this year?

Teresa: Of course it is.

Travis: Okay, thank you.

Teresa: But also, I love—there was a pumpkin once I saw that someone did kind of, like, a vignette of a farm scene with, like, a harvest moon and a silo and a barn and all that kind of stuff.

Travis: That's cute.

Teresa: I think that, definitely. That's an all seasons pumpkin. That's beautiful.

Travis: That's—you can leave that out for spring.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Leave that out for summer.

Teresa: If you carve it out of foam, like I do, you can.

Travis: Yeah. Okay, that's gonna do it for us. Thank you so much. Oh! Uh, first, before we get to normal wrap-up stuff, I wanna let you all know, Teresa and I are doing a miniseries podcast called *Bake On*. Uh, it is now on Apple Podcasts, it's on Spotify, it's on Pocket Casts. I don't know, look for it. See if you can find it.

Teresa: YouTube.

Travis: It's on YouTube. Uh, you can watch it there on the McElroy Family YouTube. Teresa and I were watching and discussing the new season of *Great British Bake Off*, coming episode by episode. So, so far the first two episodes are up: cake week and biscuit week. I think it's really fun and cute, and I think it's good, and I think you'll like it. So you should go check that out.

Teresa: We take out our needlework, or we—

Travis: Sure. We do some niddling—ni—niddling?

Teresa: Knitting—niddle—[wheeze-laughs]

Travis: Do a little niddling.

Teresa: We eat biscuits.

Travis: We did. Today—oh, there's a new episode out. We're gonna go to a bakery, buy some fancy breads. Oh.

Teresa: Yeahhh.

Travis: Make a real day out of it. Um, also, want to let you know that my brothers and I wrote a book about how to podcast called *Everybody Has a Podcast (Except You)*.

Teresa: I wrote a tiny bit, too.

Travis: Yeah, you did. Um, we're doing—we're reading the audiobook this week. Uh, and in reading it again, I'm reminded that it is very good and funny. [laughs quietly]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And I think that you will like it. It will teach you how to make a podcast you're proud of, and I think you'll enjoy reading it, 'cause I'm enjoying reading it, and I wrote it. Uh, you can preorder it at mcelroypodcastbook.com. It comes out in January. What are you waiting for? Go get it.

Um, let's see. We've got some new merch over in the merch store. Uh, we are back doin' the pin of the month things. Um, this week's—or this month's pin of the month is based on a *My Brother, My Brother, and Me* gag about a tiger on the table. It's a weird idiom that I think we made up where you say, like, "Let's put the tiger on the table and yell at it." It's weird. But—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —the pin of the month is designed by Sam Schultz, and the proceeds benefit the Marsha P. Johnson Institute, which defends and protects the rights of Black transgender and gender non-conforming people, as well as the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, which works to guarantee that all people to free to determine their gender identity and expression.

We've also got Candlesnights ornaments on there designed by Lin Doyle. Uh, Candlesnights wrapping paper designed by Justin Grey, a "Thanks for vibing and keeping it tight" T-shirt [through laughter] that's very cute—

Teresa: Niiice.

Travis: —uh, all at mcelroymerch.com. Uh, and I think that's all the things that I wanted to push. Let's see. Who else do we thank, Teresa?

Teresa: We always thank Brent "Brental Floss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. Also, thank you to Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art, that's @shmannerstcast, where we get all of your listener-submitted questions.

Thank you to Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover picture of our fan-run Facebook group, Shmannerst Fanners. You can go and join that, if you love to give and get excellent advice from other fans.

Um, also, if you have idioms, if you have topic suggestions, please email us, shmannerstcast@gmail.com. Um, our wonderful researcher Alex goes through every single one of those—

Travis: And thank you, Alex. We couldn't do it without you.

Teresa: Thank you, Alex. And thank you to Max Fun. Um, if you enjoyed our show, go ahead, head over to Max Fun and find lots more shows that you enjoy there.

Travis: They're great, folks. They're all great. And that's gonna do it for us. Thank you for joining 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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