

Shmanners 233: Costumes

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Travis: What did the mask say to the face?

Teresa: I don't know, what?

Travis: "Don't worry! I've got you covered."

Teresa: [laughs] 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: I can't believe you laughed at that.

Teresa: I love that joke!

Travis: That was so dumb! Like, is it even a joke?! I made it up, and I don't know if it's good or not.

Teresa: I think it's good.

Travis: Ugh.

Teresa: I'm always a sucker for those kind of things. You know, the—the costume that says, "Woo hoo! Go ceiling!" 'Cause you're a ceiling fan? You get it?

Travis: Ohh, okay.

Teresa: Yeah. I love that kind of stuff.

Travis: Ugh. We're talkin' about costumes.

Teresa: Yeah we are!

Travis: 'Stumes.

Teresa: 'Stumes.

Travis: As the kids call 'em.

Teresa: This year, uh, we're doing a family costume.

Travis: Sure, sure, sure. Yes.

Teresa: I have a shirt—a red shirt that says—

Travis: You say "Family costume." We're not *going* anywhere.

Teresa: But we will—we're gonna dress up anyway. I don't care! I don't care if you're not going anywhere. If you wanna dress up, dress up!

Travis: Okay. I don't know why you're yelling at me.

Teresa: My—my shirt says ketchup. Your shirt says...

Travis: Mustard.

Teresa: Uh, Bebe's shirt says peanut butter, and Dot's shirt says sweet relish.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: It's very cute. I love it. We're condiments.

Travis: Mix it all together... and you're... vomiting!

Teresa: [laughs] I think there's some kind of, like—like, hot dog that might be good on.

Travis: With peanut butter?

Teresa: Uh, sure!

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Just a—just a soupçon.

Travis: Do you—now, I'm going to ask this question, and I know the answer.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Do you have a favorite costume from when you were a kid?

Teresa: Yes, I do.

Travis: I know what it is!

Teresa: What is it?

Travis: It's Dorothy from *Wizard of Oz*!

Teresa: Yes it is!

Travis: In fact, your mother remade that costume for you several times, and you were Dorothy, like, every year.

Teresa: For a very long time.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah, mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Starting—so, I was—I started out as Dorothy—well, not, like, started, but one of my very young costumes was Dorothy, and then, you know, I—I moved around a little bit for a couple years, but then, starting in fifth grade, I just wanted to be Dorothy. I just wanted to always be Dorothy. Um, and so my mom made me a second Dorothy costume for my middle

school body, and then she made me a third costume for my high school sized body.

Travis: I'm trying to think of, like—

Teresa: And I was able to wear that costume until I was... I was able to drink, so high school through age 21.

Travis: Now, I'm trying to think of, like, really slam dunk costumes from when I was a kid. Um... there—uh, one that you might find pictures of—there was California raisins. Me and Justin.

Teresa: Hmm, yes, we have that picture.

Travis: Um, it was simple, yet effective. Mom took some garbage bags, cut some face holes in 'em, gave us some big sunglasses, and bada bing, bada boom—

Teresa: And white gloves, right?

Travis: And white gloves, California rai—I think we also wore, like, pantyhose on our arms and—I don't know. It was great. Inflatable—inflatable, uh, you know—

Teresa: Yeah, it looked great!

Travis: —inflatable instruments. That's what I'm trying to think of.

Teresa: Ah.

Travis: Now, here's the thing about costumes, folks. The one thing I kind of know about about, like, costumes and trick or treat and Halloween, is people started wearing costumes to, like, scare away demons and evil spirits and stuff?

Teresa: Mmm, sure.

Travis: Which has always made me think, how dumb did people think demons and evil spirits were that they were like, "Aw, yeah. I'm gonna go get—whaaa? [laughs] Whaaat?! What—oh, man! Oh, I thought there was gonna be people up here, but it's all monsters Bleeghh!"

Teresa: Well, sort of.

Travis: Okay?

Teresa: Not—not quite. There are—there are multiple kind of origin stories. Much like the Marvel universe. [laughs]

Travis: Sure, sure, sure. Now, here's the thing. I assume history of costumes is another, like, huge, "Could be this or this—"

Teresa: Oh, of course, of course. We're talking specifically of the tradition of costumes around Halloween.

Travis: Yes. Because the idea of, like, dressing up is—

Teresa: Yes, fancy dress has always been there.

Travis: —almost as old as time. You know what I mean?

Teresa: Right, yeah.

Travis: I bet that there were, like, neanderthals who were, like, puttin' on mud masks to, like, scare people and be like, "Look at me! I'm gonna dance in this fur and pretend I'm an animal!" I bet that was a thing.

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: Right? It seems logical.

Teresa: It certainly—it seems logical, and I think that that's, like, a, um, *Horrible Histories* skit.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Okay. So the—the origins of the Halloween connection to costumes.

Teresa: Okay. Well, so this starts way before Christianity, right?

Travis: So, like, back in 1993.

Teresa: [laughs] Probably back to the Celts.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, so back over, like, 2000 years ago. Probably further than that, because where it really starts being mentioned in literature as Samhain, uh, meaning summer's end—

Travis: Saw-win?

Teresa: So—So-win.

Travis: So-win.

Teresa: So-win.

Travis: We—I know we mispronounced this before, but yes.

Teresa: Yes. Meaning summer's end, and—

Travis: I like that we also just threw out three different pronunciations, and then didn't pick one, as if to cover our bases. It's one of those! Saw-win, so-win, sow-win.

Teresa: I... Sow-win.

Travis: Okay. That's what we're going with.

Teresa: That's what we're going with today.

Travis: [laughs] Okay.

Teresa: [sighs] Okay. So, it was a celebration throughout Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, and the Isle of Man. Uh, to mark the end of summer and the harvest, and the beginning of the cold, dark winter.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: This makes sense. Um, that this was closely thought to, you know, to do with death.

Travis: Yeah, right?

Teresa: Yeah, right.

Travis: I mean, if you're just—especially when you're talking about these times, where you're looking at, like, okay, the year is ending, right? And then you look at spring as, like, rebirth, right? Which is a big thing with, like, Celtic, you know, worship and stuff, right? Where you have—Easter is, like, there, and Halloween is here, and Christmas is... uh? [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs] Okay. We're not here to discuss that—

Travis: [simultaneously] Yeah, let's not—we won't get into that.

Teresa: —at the moment. But—okay. So, this is when the Celts believed that the veil between the living and the dead became blurred, and so ghosts of those past were wandering around with the living.

Travis: Now, that's a pretty common thing, right? Because that's also kind of the basis for Dia de los Muertos, and, like, a lot of—this is, like, the boundary betwixt [spooky voice?] the living and the dead is thin.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: And we can walk with the ghosts and the specters! Oooh! [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: [normal] I'm sorry. Where did I just go? Where was I? Okay.

Teresa: Okay. Uh, unlike—unlike Dia de los Muertos, which is more about familial spirits, the Celts believed that not only were the dead, those who had passed—uh, it was also when evil spirits and demons might cross this veil.

Travis: Oh boy. Ugh.

Teresa: And they didn't—they didn't like that.

Travis: No!

Teresa: They didn't like that part of the whole thing.

Travis: No, no, no. But you know, you take the good, you take the bad, and there you have Samhain.

Teresa: Yes. So, they didn't—they didn't want encounter, perhaps, the evil ghosts. So they would light bonfires to ward them off, and they would also put on masks to confuse them.

Travis: "Oh! What?! [through laughter] Where did all the people go! Aw, man. I came all the way from the underworld to terrorize some Celtic farmers, and all I found were these masked creatures! I'm gonna go back down."

Teresa: I mean, it's more of, like, a protection, right? To kind of, like, blend in, right?

Travis: So you need to make sure you tell your family before they die, like, "Hey, if you come back as a ghost, I'm gonna be dressed up like bull. So just keep an eye—if you see a bull, that's me. But don't—don't tell anybody, 'cause I don't want the demons to find out."

Teresa: [laughs] Sure.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: If that's—if that's how you wanna spend your last days. That's fine.

Travis: Sure!

Teresa: Um, so again, in the great Christian rebrand of everything, TM, TM, TM—

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Um, this evolved into—it kind of, like, blended with the costumes of All Hallows Eve that we know now as Halloween, and all that stuff. Um—

Travis: 'Cause All Saints' Day is the next day?

Teresa: The next day, right. And we'll get to dressing up as saints in just a second.

Travis: Oh boy. Sounds like a whale of a good time!

Teresa: Uh, so known as galoshans or false faces, this All Hallow's Eve tradition popped up around the 16th century, where children would go house to house in various costumes or guises, and recite verses or songs in exchange for coins, apples, nuts, and other treats. What—what does this sound like?

Travis: Why, it sounds like trick and/or treat, to me!

Teresa: It sure does. Um—

Travis: Isn't it weird that this—like, that kids don't do this, like, once a month? Why—why—hey, children of the world. Why are you allowing yourselves to be corralled into only doing this once a year?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Once a month at *least*, you should demand the right to just go house to house and say, "Hey, you are an adult who can buy your own candy. I am a child. I have neither the means nor the money to go to the store and buy my own candy. So, it has become your job to provide said candy for me, and please, no Bit-O-Honeys." [laughs quietly]

Teresa: Listen. If a child rang my doorbell and said that exact thing to me, I would give them some.

Travis: This is what I'm saying.

Teresa: Um, and even—there's a record as late as 1895 where masqueraders disguised as skeletons, ghosts, and mummies would carry lanterns made out of scooped turnips. Huhhh?

Travis: Oh, right, 'cause we talked about the—okay, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Teresa: And visit homes to be rewarded with cakes, fruits, and money!

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And—

Travis: I bet the money was the good one of that, right?

Teresa: Well, yeah!

Travis: Not like now where if somebody tried to give me pennies when I'm trick or treating, now in the year 2020, as a 37 year old man, if people give me pennies I'm like, "Keep your pennies, Dave! I know that you have a job down at the accounting firm. Give me a dollar!"

Teresa: Well, this is the thing, too, right? And people, even at this time, were drawn to the wealthier looking homes, so they could get, uh, better stuff.

Travis: Of course.

Teresa: Of course! Um, alright. So... let's talk just a little bit about the trick part. And I think that we've gone through this—

Travis: Like egging?

Teresa: Well...

Travis: Or forking?

Teresa: So, we've gone through this in a couple of different ways. Um, we've talked about trick or treat, and one of the many origins of trick or treat perhaps being a, um... more of a distraction for maybe mischievous children. So if we have a party, if we give them candy, maybe they won't do things like egg my house.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Um—

Travis: Maybe we'll buy them off.

Teresa: That's one, that's one. We've talked about that before.

Travis: So they exchange is, "If you don't give me a treat, then I will be tricky, and egg your house."

Teresa: Right. Or, it—

Travis: "So instead, gimme a Bit-O-Honey."

Teresa: [laughs] What is it with Bit-O-Honey?

Travis: It's just not a very good candy! It's right up there—I'd say Bit-O-Honey, and whatever those little ones are that are, like, wrapped in black and orange wax paper? But they're, like, kind of indeterminate flavors, and—

Teresa: Kind of like... gooey peanut something.

Travis: Yeahhh, but it's like, nobody ever bought them. It's just been the same—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —candies circulating since the beginning of time.

Teresa: That's an old joke, and it has to do with fruitcake.

Travis: Yes, but I—but I repurposed it, uh, much like you might repurpose these candies to putty a wall or, uh, I don't know, to stop a leak in a pipe.

Teresa: Hmm. So there's—that's the one sort of trick or treat, but maybe also trick *for* a treat, where—we've also talked about this, where, like, you—the kids would knock on the door and have to sing a song to get candy, or tell a joke or a riddle or whatever, right?

Travis: Solve a math problem.

Teresa: Um... and so then... let's—let's move it to All Hallow's Eve, All Saints' Day, and All Souls' Day.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, so, this was kind of like the 19th century, like, party time, right? Um, and it was so popular in some places—now, this wasn't the 19th century, but going back to Shakespeare, it's—

Travis: Yeah, I've heard of that fool.

Teresa: Yeah! Yeah, yeah, yeah. [crosstalk]

Travis: I know him. He wrote, uhh...

Teresa: *Two Gentlemen of Verona.*

Travis: No, that wasn't it. Which one did he write? He wrote—oh, what's the one... oh, you know, the one where it's like—"Oh—oh, I don't like you," "Oh, I don't like you either, oh wait now I like you, let's get married."

Teresa: *Taming of the Shrew?*

Travis: No, not that one. What's the one—and it's like the father, and he's got some issues with his kid—you know the one.

Teresa: *King Lear?*

Travis: No, that's not it. You know, the one...

Teresa: [laughs] Alright. We could do this all day.

Travis: Yep.

Teresa: [laughs] Okay. So, the Christian minister, Prince Sorie Conteh, wrote that the wearing of costumes comes from believing that the souls of the departed wander the Earth until All Saints' Day and All Hallows Eve, and they were given one last chance [holding back laughter] for the dead to gain vengeance on their enemies—

Travis: Wha?

Teresa: —before moving to the next world.

Travis: Huh!

Teresa: Now, listen. So, in order to avoid being recognized by any soul that might seek vengeance, people put on masks or costumes to disguise their identities.

Travis: Oh! [wheeze-laugh] okay. Uh—uh, a much different take than... huh. Okay. It's a little less, "Oh, what a fun thing, we're gonna scare away the ghosts and goblins with our masks!"

And more like, "I still owe Dave 20 dollars. I don't want him to come back and yell at me!"

Teresa: Uh, better put on a mask!

Travis: Oh boy.

Teresa: So they don't—don't recognize me!

Travis: Oh Boise. Okay.

Teresa: Okay. So, like a lot of traditions, the US owes the tradition of Halloween, and specifically partyin' down on Halloween, to the Irish in the 1840's.

Travis: Well, I mean, I assume, like, there's lots of other contributing factors.

Teresa: Of course.

Travis: As we said—we mentioned Dia de los Muertos and a lot of different things. But you're saying, directly connected to this storyline.

Teresa: Exactly. When the Irish immigrants came over because of the potato famine. Um, they brought with them a lot of the Halloween traditions we do today. Jack-o-lanterns, ghost stories, like we talked about, this bonfire thing—

Travis: Watching *Coraline*.

[pause]

Teresa: Trick or treat—

Travis: Watching *Hocus Pocus*.

[pause]

Teresa: Trick or treating or costumes.

Travis: [simultaneously] Watching *The Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown*.

Teresa: Which isn't gonna be on TV this year.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Well, we bought it on prime for our—for—

Travis: Yeah. We don't watch normal TV anyway!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Why—you said that like it was a big revelation.

Teresa: It was a big news story! It was all over the Facebook.

Travis: I know, but, like, it affects us none at all!

Teresa: [laughs] Just trying to be relevant.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Anyway—

Travis: We're better than that. [laughs] We don't have to stay relevant. We're parents now!

Teresa: Um, so here's the thing, right? There's lots of [laughs] super scary pictures on the internet of—

Travis: Yeah dude.

Teresa: —of people dressed up in very convincingly scary costumes.

Travis: And let's be clear, here. Not scary like, "Is that a real werewolf?" But more like, "Why is that what you chose to look like?!"

Teresa: [laughs] Exactly.

Travis: Like, if you ever look at old mascots? Oh boy. [laughs]

Teresa: Ooh.

Travis: Ooh, it's haunting! Oh, it's haunting, my friend, these things that they were like, "Kids are gonna love this."

Teresa: Indeed. Um, and Halloween—this sort of festive atmosphere used to be for everybody. And then... good ol' Queen Victoria and Prince Albert came along and they said, "Adults can't have this kind of fun!"

Travis: Ugh.

Teresa: "It's improper!"

Travis: Those fuddy duddies.

Teresa: So it mostly turned into children's stuff.

Travis: Here's the problem. Here's my problem with Halloween, if I may. There is a divide in the celebrations, right? And so you have kids that go trick or treating, and then you have on the other side of it, like, what I will call sexy parties.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Right? And now, I know there are in between. I know that there is, like, "Well, I had a party and it wasn't like a sexy party. It was just like a party where me and my friends dressed up."

I'm saying, quintessential, if you're looking at dominating partygoing, it's—

Teresa: Yeah, like on movies and in TV.

Travis: Right. It's either...

Teresa: On—no, on TV and in movies, sorry. [laughs]

Travis: Right. No, it made sense to me. It's either kids trick or treating, or sexy party. Where is the in between for me, who's very tired by 9:30 PM, but also... too tall to go trick or treating. You know?

Teresa: Hmm. Now, I would argue, nobody's too tall to go trick or treating. You do you.

Travis: Yeah, we talked about this last time, yes.

Teresa: Um... I don't know. I don't know where that is. You have to find it within your heart.

Travis: I feel like we've done a pretty good job around the winter holiday time of, like, there's something for everybody. You know what I mean? Do you wanna have a sexy Christmas party? Sure. [laughs quietly] Go for it, I guess.

Teresa: [laughs] Okay. Um, so we're gonna fast forward all the way up to the 1930's.

Travis: Oh, I absolutely wanna do that. But first, how about a thank you note for our sponsors?

Teresa: Alright!

[theme music plays]

Travis: This week we wanna write a thank you note to Function of Beauty. Listen. I... am... [pause] uh—hm. Everything I was about to say sounded very narcissistic. What I was about to say is, in love with myself. And this is true.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Uh, I take a lot of pride in my appearance.

Teresa: Go ahead and love yourself!`

Travis: I love myself very much. I take a lot of pride in my appearance, and so I am always on a search for, like, the right product for me, right? Like, I'm trying to maximize my beauty potential if you will, and especially as someone who, uh, I now have purple hair, right? But I also am very prone to have, like, a dry, itchy scalp, right? And so those two things together can be very frustrating sometimes. That's why I really love Function of Beauty, because there is no one-size-fits-all when it comes to, like, your regimen, your routine.

Teresa: Right, so it's fully customizable.

Travis: Exactly! So I—for example, I can say, like, well, I have—you know, I have dye in my hair and an itchy scalp, so I need something that will work for both of those. And so then I, like, went through, I told Function of Beauty what I wanted, and it even let me pick the color! Like, it's not like it's—there's no dye in the shampoo. It's more like, "Okay, well, now your shampoo is purple, and your conditioner is pink," 'cause it's cute and I like it.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And it smells great.

Teresa: It does smell good.

Travis: All of that stuff. There are over 54 trillion possible ingredient combinations, to make a formula that's just right for you. And it's not just, like, shampoo and conditioners. They have treatments, too. I got a leave-in conditioner oil thing—

Teresa: You love that leave-in!

Travis: I love it! [through gritted teeth] I love it! [laughs]

Teresa: [through laughter] Oh, gosh!

Travis: So, take a quick but thorough quiz and tell them a little bit about your hair, and their personalized formula is delivered right at your door in a customized bottle. Mine says Function of Travis. It makes me very happy.

Teresa: Of course it does.

Travis: Plus, their formulas are vegan and cruelty-free. They never use sulfates, parabens, or any other harmful ingredient. So, what are you waiting for? Go to functionofbeauty.com/shmanners to take your four part hair profile quiz, and save 20% on your first order. Go to functionofbeauty.com/shmanners for 20% off, and let them know you heard about it from our show. One more time: functionofbeauty.com/shmanners.

Teresa: *Shmanners* is also sponsored in part this week by Billie! Billie has recreated everyday essential by delivering premium razors and high performing body care directly to you. No pink tax.

Travis: What is pink tax?

Teresa: Uh, it's where the... manufactures and middle men charge more for what they perceive as ladies' products than what they perceive as men's products.

Travis: I know that, I just wanted to make it clear. I wanna make that clear now, that I knew that.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So, why don't you go to mybillie.com and get their starter kit? It's only \$9, which includes their razor, their refill blades, and a magnetic holder to keep your razor safe and dry in between uses!

Travis: What? \$9 for all that?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: That is a great deal.

Teresa: I have really enjoyed their shaving—is it lotion? Shaving cream? Whatever it is that you shave with, you put it on. It's very—

Travis: The shave baste.

Teresa: The save—shave baste. [laughs]

Travis: That's what I like to call it.

Teresa: It is so luxurious. It's very creamy, smells great. I love it, and it makes the razor glide effortlessly.

Travis: And do they just do razors, Teresa?

Teresa: No, they do lip balm, dry shampoo, face wipes, all kind of things.

Travis: Wow!

Teresa: So you can get started by going to mybillie.com/shmanners to get the best razor you will ever own. Uh, the best part is that the starter kit is just \$9, plus free shipping always. So, go to mybillie.com/shmanners. That's spelled My B-I-L-L-I-E.com/shmanners.

[cheerful music plays]

Dave: Are you feeling elevated levels of anxiety?

[chime]

Do you quake uncontrollably even thinking about watching cable news?

[chime]

Do you have disturbing nightmares, only to realize it's two in the afternoon and you're up?

[three chimes]

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Travis: Okay. Now, you mentioned something about 1930. We've just won the first Great War! Yes!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: The second World War looms in the future, but we don't know that yet. I think the stock market is doin' okay? Prohibition—

Teresa: Uhhh...

Travis: Oh no! I'm—[laughs]

Teresa: Oh no. Oh no.

Travis: —I'm out of my depth!

Teresa: Abandon. Abandon ship. [laughs]

Travis: I'm out, I'm out, I'm out. So, tell me.

Teresa: So, what I'm talking about in the 30's is, uh, this is where we start to see mass produced costumes that you can actually, like, buy at the store. Now, these were still pretty spooky, but I—I have to think that a homemade costume really shows your dedication. [laughs]

Travis: Sure. Sure. And skill.

Teresa: And skill!

Travis: And spookiness.

Teresa: But luckily for you, if you don't have those things, or don't have time or inclination, mass produced, available at your store—not year round, usually.

Travis: Well... maybe.

Teresa: Maybe.

Travis: Yeah! Why do those Halloween stores close on November 1st? [laughs quietly]

Teresa: Hmm, I wonder.

Travis: Huh, weird! Okay.

Teresa: Uh, and this also helped spread the idea of trick or treating, because now if you had the means to buy it, you could buy yourself a costume and go trick or treating.

Travis: It probably made it a lot more kind of available to other people, right? Because not everybody had sewing machines, not everybody had the skill, not everybody had the time. All of those things.

Teresa: All that stuff. Um, and then in the 40's and 50's there was some wavering in there due to sugar rationing and things like that.

Travis: Oh, sure, sure, sure.

Teresa: Um, but this is really considered one of the golden ages of—of trick or treat, because now not only, you know, your usual skeletons, mummies, vampires, werewolves, things like that, you also start to see a lot more available for purchase things like aliens and superheroes and, you know, comic book characters, and all this kind of stuff.

Travis: Your sci-fi and your fantasy.

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Not just spooky.

Teresa: Not just spooky. So, here's the thing. Um—

Travis: Although I also will say that that move probably ruined it for some people who were like, "I'm a skeleton!" And you're like, "I don't get it. What do you mean—like, what kind of skeleton?"

"No, just—I'm just a skeleton."

Like, "[clicks tongue] Okay, come on, man. Put some work into it."

"I *did* put work into it!"

"Yeah, but, like, what's the concept? Like, what's the c—what—what are you?"

Like, "I'm a skeleton."

Teresa: Hey, don't be—don't be a bummer, guys.

Travis: That's what I'm saying.

Teresa: Um, this is kind of a bummer.

Travis: Oh no!

Teresa: Sorry.

Travis: Oh no!

Teresa: The United States in particular has a history of some questionable costume choices.

Travis: Oh, gosh. Oh, goodness, yes.

Teresa: Sort of like, maybe, Native Americans, Middle Eastern people, Mexican people.

Travis: It's—it's—honestly, run down the list, and you can just go ahead and preemptively put a checkmark next to any box. If you're like, "I wonder if there was an offensive—" Yep. Mm-hmm. Uh-huh.

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Travis: And here—okay. Here's—I would like to take a second and recognize that we are two white, straight, cisgendered people.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: But as I understand it, here is maybe some insight on this. There's different levels here, and different ways in which a costume can be inappropriate.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Um, one, it can just be straight up offensive, right? You know, if you are making a costume that's, like, the victim of some kind of attack, that is offensive, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Then it can be appropriative, right? Where you are dressing in a outfit that would be a traditional kind of maybe uniform or outfit or dress for some kind of cultural celebration.

Teresa: Right. Maybe like, quote, "The Mexican band," quote.

Travis: Right, right. And then there is also—just the idea of, other cultures are not costumes. Right? There are clothes that people wear every day or wear for these traditional celebrations or whatever, what have you. And you saying, "And now I'm going to wear it like it's a fun costume," is just incredibly derogatory and offensive. And the fact of the matter is, there's so many fun options out there that everyone can enjoy without making fun of people. Um, that it is—at this point I would say not only offensive, but just lazy, to be offensive. Be more creative, and less offensive!

Teresa: Right. Um, so when picking costumes, because we equate so many of these Halloween costumes as, you know, monsters. You know, like vampires and werewolves and things like that. Think about, if I'm wearing this next to a vampire... am I saying that this is on par with a monster?

Travis: Hmm, that's a good way—

Teresa: That's a good way to think about it, right?

Travis: Yeah. "Is the joke that I'm making fun of something?" Right? And—let's put it a different way. "Is the joke that I am making fun of someone who really exists in the world?"

Teresa: Hmm, yeah.

Travis: And if so, perhaps, uh—no, I would say definitely skip it.

Teresa: [laughs] I mean—and I want to say that, um, that's not saying that you can't dress—put on a sweater and a white wig and not be Albert Einstein, right? That's not to say that. It's to say that... this could hurt someone, so probably think of something else.

Travis: Uh, and I'm also just gonna say, across the board, if it requires you to put on makeup to change your skin tone... that's out. That is out 100%.

Teresa: Oh, except if it's green. [laughs]

Travis: Unless it's gree—okay. If—okay.

Teresa: A skin tone that really exists. That's out.

Travis: Yet. Not, like, skeleton or, like, uh, uh, uh, uh—you get—hey. Use your best judgment. You know what I mean? We're all either adults or children who know better. [laughs quietly] Use your best judgment. Use your best shmanners.

Teresa: Some more do's. If you don't celebrate Halloween, don't feel like you need to wear a costume to go to a party.

Travis: Well, so I want to address a question that we were asked, that I am pulling up right now, as we speak... I'm opening the questions right now. This is it.

Teresa: I'm—I'm listening to you.

Travis: Opening—I know, but I'm still open—okay. Uh, this is from @chan_spork.

"I don't like dressing up for Halloween. I believe my friends and family are good people who would exclude from—" uh, uh—

Teresa: Who wouldn't.

Travis: "—who wouldn't exclude me from events based on my clothes any other day, yet on Halloween it's considered acceptable to say, "Wear a costume or you can't come to the party. Why is this okay?"

Here is why. When you dress up, when you are putting on a costume, you are doing something outside of your comfort zone, right? This is not how you dress normally. You are kind of putting yourself out there and saying, like, "I put effort into this, and I chose to dress up like this." Right? And anytime you make an effort like that, it makes you feel a little bit more vulnerable. So I think that there is a kind of subconscious, or in some cases conscious fear that if I put myself out there, and this person doesn't, and we are at the same thing, I will feel silly next to them.

Teresa: Oh, so that's why they say, "Wear a costume or you can't come."

Travis: Right. I don't think—

Teresa: I wasn't sure where you were going with this. Okay, I got it.

Travis: Right. I don't think it's because they don't want you there. I think it is because they are looking for a level of universal kind of buy in to the idea, so everyone can feel more comfortable doing it. Whereas if it's, like, some people are dressing up and some people aren't, there may be people who wanna dress up but will feel embarrassed. Will worry, like, "What if I'm the only one who's dressed up, or what if I feel silly because I'm dressed up and they're not?"

And so I think that that is why. I don't think it's because they want to exclude you. And it might be worth talking to them and saying, like, "I don't really feel comfortable with this." But, like, there might be some level of something you can do, like put on a pair of bunny ears, and that's your costume.

Teresa: Or a t-shirt that says ketchup. [laughs]

Travis: Right. So that way you are dressed up, but in a manner you are comfortable with. And so that way everyone is on board.

Teresa: And also, if you really don't want to wear a costume, if you talk to your friends and family and find out why it is that they need you to wear the costume,

other than "It's a Halloween party!" You know, get to—maybe get to the heart of the matter, if it really matters to you to go.

Travis: Conversation. Uh, this is—this is from—I'm gonna try. It's got an umlaut in there. So I'm gonna say Fün—Fünhilde.

Teresa: Sure!

Travis: Right.

"How to ask someone to make your costume would also be great info to share and discuss."

So, I have now had a couple costumes made for me, specifically for Adventure Zone live shows, but I have worked in theater as well. One, be ready, and offer to pay them, right? This person is doing a lot of work. You are also going to pay for the materials. Even if they're like, "Oh, you don't have to pay me to do it, I'm ha—" whatever. You're gonna pay for the materials.

Teresa: Unless maybe you're ten and it's your mom.

Travis: Well, okay, Teresa! Yes, obvs.

Teresa: I'm just saying.

Travis: Um, you should be ready to, like, give them measurements, give them guidance. Listen. In no world—there is not a world that exists where you should call someone and say, "Hey, make me some kind of costume. Okay, bye!" And leave them with no other details or means.

Teresa: [laughs] If that was me, and I was that someone, I would say, "No! I will not!"

Travis: Yeah. I'd be like, "Who is this? You didn't even say your name, or hello, or anything."

Teresa: [laughs] Okay. Uh, hit me with another question.

Travis: And also, give them a timeframe. Like, give them enough time. Don't call 'em the day before the party and be like, "Hey, I need you to make me a super intricate costume."

Teresa: Mm-hmm. These are all great, very considerate things to do.

Travis: And as far as the me—here's how I would phrase it. I would ask them like, this. "If I commissioned you to make me this costume, what do you think the budget for that would look like?" Right? So that way you're not saying, "And I'd be willing to pay you." You are baking into the ask that you will be paying them.

Um, this is from @tyisreallygay.

"How do I ask to borrow someone else's costume, or if we can match, without sounding needy or demanding?"

Teresa: I think that if you lead with, "I have a great idea. Let's be salt and pepper for Halloween!" Right?

Travis: Can I tweak that slightly?

Teresa: Oh, sure.

Travis: "Would you be interested in being salt and pepper with me?" Right?

Teresa: Ahh, okay. Great.

Travis: Because that way you're not putting them on the spot.

Teresa: And I'm talking about the condiments. I'm on a real condiment kick. Salt and pepper—

Travis: Yeah. I can tell, 'cause you didn't say Pepa.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: You said pepper.

Teresa: The seasonings.

Travis: Yes. And so that way you're giving them the opportunity where it's like—you could even—I mean, if you're super worried about it you could say, "Do you have plans for your costume? I had an idea and I'm looking for someone to do it with me. Would you be interested?"

Teresa: Sure!

Travis: Right? But I think—we talk about this a lot. The idea of worrying about sounding needy or demanding because you asked if they wanted to do a Halloween costume with you, I think it's okay. Now, as far as asking...

Teresa: Right. I love to say things like, "I was really impressed with your costume last year. Would it be available to borrow it this year?"

Travis: Yes. And then, you know, there's all the shmammers around, like, taking good care of it, returning it in a timely fashion, if it gets damaged, replacing it, all of those things.

Teresa: And that way you're not, like, assuming that the costume is still intact, right? Because you're asking if it's available. If it was, like, a homemade costume, maybe they had to take it apart to, you know, wear that sweater.

Travis: Or maybe they were planning to wear it again, you know?

Teresa: Oh, it's true.

Travis: Like Teresa wore her costume every year forever.

Teresa: Yes!

Travis: Um, this is from @Moonsoother.

"Sexy fill in the blank costumes are a staple of the Halloween season, but how sexy is too sexy?"

Teresa: You gotta d—it's about where you're going, and how comfortable you are, right?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Um, but, like... if you wanna be sexy at an adult Halloween party, get down with your sexy self! This is 2020.

Travis: Here's what I will say. If you're going to do it, you gotta think about that you will be in motion, at a party for X amount of time, right? So don't just, like, put it on, stand in front of a mirror and be like, "This works." Walk around in it. Are you comfortable? Are you constantly, like, tugging at, you know, hems and seams and stuff to try to make yourself feel comfortable? 'Cause you don't want something that, like, as soon as you get somewhere you're like, "Well, now I'm self conscious walking around." Right? Think about moving in it. And is it outside? Is it gonna be cold? Is it inside? You know, that kind of thing.

Teresa: So it's more about logistics than it is about body parts.

Travis: Right. If you wanna wear it, and it's not, like, I don't know, R-rated at a PG party, right? Then it's fine. It's fine. And listen, there may be other people who judge you, because people judge sometimes, and they are bad. Don't judge people.

Okay. If you are—let's see. This is from Lev.

"If you're throwing a party, assuming a non-plague state—" Yes. "—is it rude to have outlines for guest costumes, especially in the interest of discouraging appropriative costumes?"

I don't think so at all. I think—I think on the invite if you wanna put, like, uh, you know, "Insensitive, offensive, or appropriative costumes will not be allowed, will not be tolerated."

Teresa: I would encourage you to put it in the positive, right? Something like, "Be cool, and show us your wit in your costume!" Or, um—

Travis: I—now, okay. Here's where I will disagree with you.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: I understand what you're saying, and we often try to be positive and stuff in this show. But that assumes a level of introspection and awareness that not everybody has. I think in something like this where sometimes things can slip past people's first layer filter, saying right out of the gate, offensive, appropriative

and, you know, insensitive costumes will not be tolerated. That's just my—if—I think that that is an okay thing to say. Or, let's split the difference. Costumes that everyone can enjoy, right?

Teresa: Or what about—what about like you said earlier? Culture is not a costume.

Travis: Culture is not a costume, and trauma is not a costume. Right?

Teresa: Sure, yeah, yeah, I think there is a line to ride. You can definitely mention it, but craft your response, you know, nicely.

Travis: And I think... now, in the year 2020, this isn't so much of an issue. But I ever host a costume party again, I have a couple, like, cloaks that I had from, like... [sighs] from leading a... cult. [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Called the Cincinnati Underground Society, but also, like, Adventure Zone and stuff. And I would have that available that if somebody came in and I was like, "Hey—" we also had a question and this is from Rey.

"What do you do if one of your friends shows up in a racist or culturally appropriative costume? What's a good way to bring their attention to the problem?"

I think good shmanners, when dealing with a friend, someone that you know, is to assume ignorance rather than intention.

Teresa: Agreed.

Travis: And so I think having, as the host, a cloak or something where you're like, "Hey. I am going to assume that you didn't realize that this was offensive, and I don't want you to have to leave the party. And so now, you're gonna have a cloak for a costume so you can continue to enjoy it without upsetting anyone." Right?

Teresa: Sure. I think that's alright. I mean, you could even offer any other costume that you might have.

Travis: Right, like, summer Frankenstein.

Teresa: Or... [pause] maybe, uh—oh. I can't think of any of the other costumes Teddy had in his closet. Darnit.

Travis: Okay. This is from @eatcandles.

"How do you handle a situation in which you and another person are wearing the exact same costume?"

Teresa: Twinsies!

Travis: Yeah, you take those pictures.

Teresa: Yeah you do!

Travis: You get pictures with them. That's great.

Teresa: I wish that the whole party would show up in all the same costumes. Oh, like a whole *Bob's Burgers* family! Everybody is Linda.

Travis: There was one year where, without any discussion—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —Griffin and Rachel, Teresa and I, and our friends Bradbury and Liz, were all Bob and Linda. Like, on the same night, in three different states, with no discussion whatsoever.

Teresa: It's amazing. So great.

Travis: Um, let's see. This is from @clampunk

"Costume contest etiquette."

Um, I will say, here is my suggestion. Just to—

Teresa: No sabotage. Be gracious.

Travis: No s—[laughs quietly] yes, of course. Um, everybody's costumes deserver, uh, applause.

Teresa: And accolade.

Travis: Accolade, that's what I'm looking for.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Right? Because this is—

Teresa: I saw it on your face.

Travis: Thank you. This is a thing that I have seen people, like, judge cosplayers at conventions before, right? Where it's clear that somebody had, like, the time and materials and ability to do this, like, epic, like, Transformers, you know—and other people are just doing it for fun, right? Both of those people are putting themselves out there. Both of those people deserve accolade, right? And, you know, have fun.

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Okay. That's gonna do it for us. Thank you so much for joining us. Let's see. What do we need to talk about, Teresa? Let's see.

Teresa: Hm, let's see. Uh, do you want me to do my stuff first, or you want—

Travis: Yes, you go first.

Teresa: Okay, I'll go first. We always like to thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. Thank you to Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art. That's where we got these lovely questions from our fans. It's @shmannerscast. Um, and then also, thank you to Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover picture of our fan-run Facebook group, *Shmanners* Fanners. Go ahead and join that if you love to give and get excellent advice from other fans.

Um, also, you can submit your topics to us. We're always taking those idioms. We've almost got another full show ahead of those. Um, and email us—

Travis: Oh—oh, we also had the idea to do—to do, like, idioms from other countries?

Teresa: Yeah, send us those!

Travis: Yeah, let us know.

Teresa: Um, you can email us, shmatterscast@gmail.com.

Travis: Um, we've got some really cool merch over at mcelroymerch.com. We've got a new *Sawbones* horseshoe crab shirt. There's a tiger on the table pin of the month, designed by Sam Schultz, which benefits the Marsha P. Johnson Institute and the Sylvia Rivera Law Project. There's a Candlesnights ornament by Lin Doyle, Candlesnights wrapping paper by Justin Gray, a really cute jump scare pin, a "Thanks for vibing and keeping it tight" shirt, which benefits the Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights.

Uh, all of that at mcelroymerch.com. Teresa and I are doing, like, a miniseries podcast about the new season of *Great British Bake Off* called *Bake On*, so look for that in your podcatcher, or on the McElroy Family Youtube Channel.

Teresa: We have a lovely fruit tart to eat this week.

Travis: Ohh, yeah. We got fruit tart for pastry week. Very exciting stuff. Uh, you can also go to themcelroypodcastbook.com. That's themcelroypodcastbook.com to preorder our new how-to-podcast guide called *Everybody Has a Podcast (Except You)*. It's available for preorder now, comes out in January. You can also preorder *The Adventure Zone: Crystal Kingdom*, Book Four of our graphic novel series, at theadventurezonecomic.com.

That's gonna do it for us. Join us again next week.

Teresa: No RSVP required!

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

Teresa: Manners, *Shmatters*. Get it?

[theme music plays]

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