

Shmanners 234: Chocolate

Published October 30th, 2020

[Listen on TheMcElroy.family](#)

Travis: What did the peppermint say to the tardy cocoa?

Teresa: What?

Travis: Better choco-late than never!

Teresa: [sighs] It's Shmanners.

[theme music plays]

Travis: Hello, internet! I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy.

Teresa: And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy.

Travis: And you're listening to Shmanners!

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette...

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

Teresa: Hello, dear.

Travis: How are you?

Teresa: Well...

Travis: That was a good joke.

Teresa: That was not a good joke.

Travis: It was a good joke! Choco-late. Better choco-late than never!

Teresa: Cho— chocolate. But nobody says choco-late.

Travis: No, but... of course they don't say it. That's why it's the joke. The joke... it's choco-late. "Better choco-late than never!" Do you hear what I'm saying?

Teresa: I—[sighs]

Travis: `Cause you're right. Normally...

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Normally, you'd say chocolate. Right?

Teresa: Chocolate.

Travis: But for the purpose of this joke, the peppermint, who— normally, peppermints don't talk, either. That doesn't bother you, it seems.

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: But the peppermint says, "Better choco-late than never!"

Teresa: Alright.

Travis: Do you see? Because it's like, um... kind of a— it's kind of like, my take on a joke. It's kind of like a...

Teresa: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Travis: A play on words, if you will. Choco-late!

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Better choco-late than never!

Teresa: I'll give it to you that it was punny.

Travis: Yeah. I mean, that's the best I can hope for, if I'm being honest.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Hi, everybody! Welcome to our Halloween special!

Teresa: Oooh!

Travis: Or should I say, spooky holiday special.

Teresa: Spooky holiday... uh, I mean, really just, uh... how about sugar holiday? [laughs]

Travis: Do we do... on Samhain, is there candy? Is that a thing with Samhain? I don't know enough about Samhain. Next year, we're gonna have to do a whole Samhain episode.

Teresa: I think so. I think you're right. So, we're gonna call this the candy holiday.

Travis: Yes, because this is the thing, folks. Chocolate, which we are talking about today, could apply to... a wide array of event— I mean, Valentine's Day.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: The winter holidays.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: There's chocolate in all of those. Easter.

Teresa: Mm-hmm. Chocolate bunnies.

Travis: There's cho— but when I think of Halloween, there's two things that come to mind. Costumes and trick-or-treat. And the first one is trick-or-treat. And I don't know about you folks at home... and I don't even know about you folk, here in this room with me.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: But when I used to trick-or-treat as a kid, the two things I prized most was like... anything chocolate.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And I was also a big fan of bubblegum.

Teresa: Really?

Travis: Yeah, but chocolate was top of the list, and then bubblegum.

Teresa: Okay. Let's have a little... let's have a candy rating scale.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Uh, what is your *least* favorite Halloween trick-or-treat style candy?

Travis: I mean, it's the... here's the thing. I've talked a lot about like, Bit-O-Honey. And like, Sugar Daddies.

Teresa: And Mary Janes as well.

Travis: And Mary Janes. Anything that's like, pull your fillings out, caramel, and that's its whole deal? Not a fan of.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: I don't like having my teeth stuck together, even though I just said I like bubblegum. But that's different, because that's a battle between your teeth and the gum that you might win, as opposed to like, those caramel candies, where it's like, "Oh no, you're gonna lose. You're losing your fillings."

Teresa: Alright.

Travis: Now, my favorite Halloween candy... I mean, it's obviously chocolate, like I said.

Teresa: No, like, your favorite, like— if you were looking through the bag, and someone was like, "Well, you only get to keep one," which piece of candy do you keep?

Travis: I think Twix.

Teresa: Twix, okay.

Travis: Twix I like. There's a lot of good consistencies in there. Lot of good texture. I enjoy a Snickers. I enjoy a dark chocolate Milky Way.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: But I think that Twix—

Teresa: Otherwise known as Milky Way Midnight.

Travis: Sure. But I enjoy the Twix because of its, uh, mouth feel. [laughs]

Teresa: Mm.

Travis: What about you?

Teresa: Um, so... this has, like... okay.

Travis: Ooh. We're getting serial.

Teresa: My *least* favorite is the like, peanut butter taffies.

Travis: Oh yeah, the ones in the black and orange?

Teresa: In the black and orange little, like, twisty-ups. Blech.

Travis: Yeah, they're the worst.

Teresa: Blegh. My favorite is, specifically, I like the treat size Milky Way Midnights. The ones that are just the square.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: You can open and pop the whole thing in your mouth.

Travis: Oh, I also enjoy a Reese's chocolate pumpkin. Or really, like, any of the Reese's.

Teresa: Reese's cups are pretty good.

Travis: I enjoy it. Whatever that strange varietal of peanut butter that like, is never a peanut butter you would put on a sandwich, but it's perfect in chocolate. That's great.

Teresa: Yeah. That's good too.

Travis: Okay, so we're talking about chocolate. Now I know—

Teresa: Oh! Y'know what else?

Travis: Hm?

Teresa: Did you— have you tried these new— they're not super new, but the Zombie Skittles?

Travis: I have not.

Teresa: So, here's the deal, right? So, in the Skittle pack, and you know it's a Zombie Skittle because of the gray package. There are like, ten Skittles, one of which is a bad flavor.

Travis: No thank you. I don't like— why would I want candy that punishes me?

Teresa: I know, right?

Travis: This is the thing. I grew up doing the— the—

Teresa: And you have no way of knowing which one it is, because it's the same color as all the regular flavors.

Travis: Are there still the like, Atomic Warheads, and like, sour blasters or whatever?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I enjoyed those when I was a kid, but now as an adult, the idea of like, "Hey, do you want a treat that also... hurts your mouth and cuts up your tongue?" No thank you.

Teresa: [laughs] Yeah.

Travis: Now, if you're into that, that's great. That's fine. It's not my bag.

Teresa: Not my bag either.

Travis: Okay. So chocolate, I know is old.

Teresa: Chocolate.

Travis: I know chocolate is old. I knooow chocolate is old!

Teresa: Surely is.

Travis: We've been doing it in like, the Mayans were doing it forever ago, right?

Teresa: Even before that. So, the Olmecs of southern Mexico – and y'know, the great Mayan empire, like you said – have been processing and drinking chocolate probably as far back as 1500 BCE.

Travis: Now, but I also know this. It wasn't like, sweet chocolate.

Teresa: No.

Travis: This was like, no sugar added. This was like, bitter bitter. So probably, I'm just betting, more like coffee. Right? Where it was like, bitter...

Teresa: Uh, I mean...

Travis: I don't— can I just say? I do not like the connotation of the word 'bitter.'

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: I enjoy— like, I drink my coffee black, right? I like— I do not like that bitter is both a flavor, and like, a kind of bad state of being.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: 'Cause I feel like when you say something is bitter, it makes it sound like it tastes bad. Like, if you say, "Oh, that coffee is bitter," people would be like, "Oh, then I don't want to consume it." Like, no, but like, in a good way. It's bitter in a good way. I don't like things that are overly sweet.

Teresa: I definitely see the point there. I mean, because dark chocolate is my favorite. The darker the better. I mean— okay, not the darker the better.

Travis: No. You wouldn't do like, 100%.

Teresa: No.

Travis: But 72...

Teresa: 72 is the sweet spot. Anyway, um, so, it was definitely savory. It was not sweetened. But the roasting process, a lot like coffee beans, did bring out different, subtler flavors in it. But it was mixed with water. Um, sometimes, like, super frothy. But it was— it was not the hot chocolate we know of today.

But the best part about the actual dating of the chocolate is, um, that the beans of the cocoa pod... um, have to be roasted and dried.

Travis: Much like coffee.

Teresa: Much like coffee. And there is a substance called theobromine.

Travis: Eh?

Teresa: Which is the stimulant compound found in chocolate and tea.

Travis: Like caffeine.

Teresa: Sort of! Close.

Travis: Ah.

Teresa: Close. But it leaves a trace. Leaves a residue. So, unlike a lot of other things, where we're like, "Eh, probably happened around this time," there have been like, pots and processing, like, places...

Travis: Where you can like, carbon date?

Teresa: You can actually date it!

Travis: Oh wow! Okay!

Teresa: Yeah! Pretty cool!

Travis: And it's old.

Teresa: Yes. As long ago as 1500 BCE.

Travis: Okay. That's long before I was born. I was not around then.

Teresa: Yes. [laughs] Not at all.

Travis: Not even close. Juuust missed it.

Teresa: [laughs] Okay. So, here's where we get in kind of the like, socioeconomic, um, strata of chocolate.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So, the Olmecs reserved cacao for sacred ceremonies, and...

Travis: That makes sense though, if you think about it, 'cause it was like, a process to make it, right?

Teresa: Yeah. It was not easy.

Travis: They didn't have like, the machinery to do it. So, you're roasting and doing all this by hand, right?

Teresa: Exactly. In a similar way, the Aztecs and Mayans believed that cacao was sacred. And it's even rumored...

Travis: Uh-huh? Go on. Spill that tea!

Teresa: Aztecs would give this type of cacao drink to those being, um, let's say, the center of their religious activity.

Travis: Being given to the gods.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: There you go.

Teresa: Indeed. Um, it was also considered—

Travis: Why aren't we saying 'sacrificed,' by the way? [laughs] Just 'cause it's unpleasant?

Teresa: I don't know. It's unpleasant.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, I think people got it without saying it.

Travis: No, I think they got it too, I just wasn't sure why we were dancing around it. Y'know what I mean? Given— wink, wink! [laughs]

Teresa: It... it's unpleasant.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Anyway. Uh, it was given medicinal properties. So, not only the beans, but also the flowers were used to cure fatigue. And...

Travis: Is that true, though? I mean, not true, but like...

Teresa: Sort of? Well, there may be a little bit of truth to it. Um, so, in Ayurvedic medicine, which is one of the oldest medicinal practices in the

world, the cacao bean is used. Raw cacao is rich in antioxidants and compounds that actually have been linked to improved mood and memory while reducing stress.

Travis: Okay. So it may not be like, medicine medicine. But it might be good for you.

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: I feel like this is a thing, though, forever. Is like, every year, there is a new study, and it's red wine and chocolate. And it's either like, "Turns out, it's good for you! Oh, no, wait! Bad for you. No! Oh, hold on! Might be good for you!" And it's like, alright, y'know what? It makes me happy when I consume both of those, especially if I consume both of them together, so get off my back, science.

Teresa: [laughs] Uh, I think that the important thing to remember about cacao is that it is, um, the actual cacao that has the benefits, and not like, the sugar processed chocolate candy.

Travis: Yeah yeah yeah. Yeah yeah yeah. Eating a Snickers isn't going to make you live longer. [laughs]

Teresa: No. It's not.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, so then, we know that chocolate is mostly like, a South, Central Americas type deal. It did eventually make it back to Europe, where the craze really took hold, especially in Spain.

Travis: Well, that makes sense, because I was thinking about climates, right? And like, it is a fairly tropical— the cacao is, like, a tropical plant, right? So, it makes sense that it would grow well in Spain, where the climate is a little more... y'know, tropical.

Teresa: Temperate. Yeah, warmer.

Travis: Not quite as cold as what I think of in most of Europe. I think of most of Europe as pretty much, um, foggy all the time.

Teresa: Really?

Travis: Yeah. Just a little bit moist. All of Europe. Hey, to all of our European listeners – I'm so, so sorry that I just said all of that.

Teresa: Um, but the thing is, like a lot of, quote, "new world produce", the Spaniards were kind of like, "Uhh," when it first came to chocolate, the same way they were with like, corn. Right? Um, but... one incredible story is that a particular explorer in the central Americas was offered the drink several times, and refused every time, saying it was a drink "fit for pigs." And he finally took some, because he ran out of wine. [laughs]

Travis: Ah. That old chestnut.

Teresa: Yeahhh. He loved it. So, by the late 1500s, it was—

Travis: I do like, though, how that kind of— that little story encapsulates, like, uh... that person thinking they're better than the people that they are invading, and pillaging, and then being like, "Oh no, wait, actually... this is very good. And so, now I'm going to steal it from you."

Teresa: That's right. It's like potatoes for the French.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Um, so, by the 1500s, it was pretty popular. It was indulged in by the court, and uh, the whole country began importing chocolate in 1585. Other European countries, Italy, France, y'know, went to Central America and learned about cacao and brought it back, and each created, really, their own sort of style, enjoying that bean.

So, the high demand for chocolate created a, um... a less than savory work environment. Enslaved people were often made to make the chocolate. And

it was considered part of the kind of enslavement cycle, because also, in this time were the molasses making, and the sugar plantations, and all that kind of stuff.

So, even though this chocolate feeds into the history of enslavement, it's not like, the central player. And it's important nowadays that, if you can afford it, that you find fair trade chocolate.

Travis: Fair trade. And fair trade coffee. Fair trade anything you can get.

Teresa: Fair trade coffee. Because we want to support people for their labor. Anyway, um... so, this is when the european palate took hold of the chocolate.

Travis: And sweetened it up.

Teresa: Yeahhh. Cane sugar, cinnamon, spices, vanilla, all that stuff was added. But it was still pretty hard to like, make it?

Travis: Yeah. Right.

Teresa: Right. Until Dutch process cocoa comes around.

Travis: Ahh, the Dutch!

Teresa: The Dutch!

Travis: Ahhh, the Dutch!

Teresa: 1828, a Dutch chemist named... [clears throat]

Travis: You can do it.

Teresa: Conrad... Johannes van Houten.

Travis: Okay. Sure.

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Um, he discovered a way to treat cacao beans with alkaline salts to make a powdered chocolate that was easier to mix with water.

Travis: Okay!

Teresa: Ta-da!

Travis: And that gave us, like, powdered hot chocolate, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. Uh, he also invented a machine that separated cocoa butter from the cacao beans, that was practically inexpensive and made that powdery substance that you could put in things. This process became known as Dutch processing, or Dutch cocoa. See, unprocessed... the chocolate is not chocolate. It's cacao.

Travis: Cacao.

Teresa: And then, processed, it became cocoa.

Travis: Well, 'cause then we get the cocoa butter and the cocoa solids, right?

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: And cocoa butter is what's used for white chocolate?

Teresa: Mm-hmm. Well, chocolate— regular chocolate does contain, uh, amounts of cocoa butter.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: But only cocoa butter is in white chocolate.

Travis: Right. There's no cocoa solids in white chocolate.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Um, okay. So, for much of the 19th century, chocolate was still being enjoyed as a beverage. Right? So it was like, added to milk or water, or even put in wine.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: Yeah. Because it was the powder. Right? You put it in your drink.

Travis: Oh, I could get down with that!

Teresa: Yeah, I think so.

Travis: I would not be above a chocolate wine!

Teresa: I think... haven't we— well, we've had chocolate flavored beer.

Travis: This is correct.

Teresa: Does it actually have chocolate in it?

Travis: In the beer?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Hmm. Y'know, I mean, it was probably brewed with it during the brewing process. But it wouldn't have solids in it.

Teresa: It would be filtered out, right? With the wort.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Anyway. Um, so, in walks British chocolatier J.S. Frye and sons.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: And they are credited with making the first chocolate bar ever.

Travis: But I don't recognize that name! I wanted it to be like, Mars or Nestle or something! A name I recognize!

Teresa: Well, I mean... that's coming.

Travis: Hershey!

Teresa: It's coming. It's coming.

Travis: Okay...

Teresa: This chocolate bar was made from sugar, chocolate liquor, and uh, cocoa butter.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: It was still not the chocolate we know today. It was pretty hard, it wasn't very melty in your mouth, it kind of like... almost exploded into a powder when you bite it. Y'know what I mean?

Travis: Uh-huh. Yeah yeah yeah.

Teresa: Right? And so, here comes those names that you were waiting for. Um, so, uh... Daniel Peter, who was Swiss, he added dry milk powder to the chocolate, creating milk chocolate in 1876.

Travis: Now, I feel like I know that name, because that's what I think of when I think of chocolate bunnies. Peter, right? I think is—

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And then, several years later, he called up his friend Henry... and brought milk chocolate to the mass market. What do you think Henry's last name was?

Travis: Ohh, okay.

Teresa: You said it already.

Travis: Mars? No. Nestle.

Teresa: Yeahhh!

Travis: Okay. I figured it was Nestle, Hershey, Cadbury, or Mars.

Teresa: Right, yeah. Those are the pretty big ones, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And we're not gonna go really into Nestle. There's a whole corporate...

Travis: Mmm.

Teresa: Corporate, uh, bummers with that.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Be responsible, Nestle. Anyway, um, this is also— 1879 is where we get Lindt. Rudolph Lindt making those delicious—

Travis: L-I-N-D-T. Not L-I-N-T.

Teresa: Right. Lindt.

Travis: Lint has been around for a long time.

Teresa: [laughs] Making those delicious, gooey center truffles I love. Mmmm.

Travis: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Teresa: Um, okay. So, by the late 19th century, we have those big ones that you talked about. Cadbury, Mars, Nestle, Hershey, all that stuff. Um, and... here's the thing, right? Uh, a couple of countries had a little bit of a tiff. A chocolate war, if you will, about the ingredients that are required for chocolate.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Some of these ingredients caused British chocolate to be banned from much of the EU for three decades.

Travis: Wow!

Teresa: I know, right?

Travis: Now, I will say, we have indulged many times in uh, British chocolate delicacies, by which I mean, chocolate bars from the UK. And uh, they are, I would say, a little different. Uhh, I find them a little creamier. Just... they do— you can taste the difference.

Teresa: You can. Um, so, I mean, there are lots of places that you can get your chocolate. I recommend that you go through SlaveFreeChocolate.org. It has a really great list of ethical chocolate companies, and resources on, y'know, how to get your kicks from chocolate, and also... have a clear conscience.

Travis: Yeah. And do the right thing. How about that?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Okay. We're gonna answer some of your questions about chocolate, but first... how about a thank you note for our sponsor?

[theme music plays]

Travis: This week, we want to write a thank you note to Stitch Fix! Listen, if you are near, I guess, where I am in the world, the weather is turning colder, and it's time to get your winter weather wardrobe in order. Um, I have gotten some of my favorite, like, sweatshirts and sweater— I have this great sweater that has like, a blue bull on it that I get compliments on every time I wear it, and every time, I say, "It's Stitch Fix."

Because with Stitch Fix, all the clothes are your style, your budget, and things you like, right? Because they have a personal stylist that works with you to get to know the kind of things you like, and you can also say like, "I would never pay more than blank for this." Right? And they keep that in mind when they pick stuff out for you.

So, if you go to StitchFix.com/Shmanners, you can set up your profile for looks personalized just for you. You pay a \$20 styling fee for each fix, which is credited towards anything you keep. You can schedule at any time. There's no subscription required, plus, shipping, returns, and exchanges are easy and free.

So get started today at StitchFix.com/Shmanners, and you'll get 25% off when you keep everything in your fix. That's StitchFix.com/Shmanners for

25% off when you keep everything in your fix. One more time –
StitchFix.com/Shmanners.

We also want to write a thank you note to Bombas. Bombas is dedicated to making the most comfortable socks in the history of feet. They've rethought every little detail of the socks we wear to make them way more comfortable.

I love Bombas so much, I have paid to get Bombas socks. That is right. I didn't just wait for them to give them to me. I love them so much, I've bought them. And some of their socks, you can get some that have the little, like, little rubbery pads on the bottom so you're not slip-slidin' around your home. I love it.

Teresa: Bombas also has other apparel. I am currently wearing a Bombas t-shirt...

Travis: Oh, they're so soft.

Teresa: ... and sweatpants.

Travis: They're wonderful. Bombas also helps give back by donating a pair to someone in need. They've donated over 34 million pairs of socks and counting. To those experiencing homelessness, these socks represent the dignity of putting on clean clothes, a small comfort that's especially important right now. So, give a pair when you buy a pair, and get 20% off your first purchase at Bombas.com/Shmanners. That's Bombas.com/Shmanners for 20% off your first purchase.
Bombas.com/Shmanners.

--

[music plays]

Annabelle: Hi. Are you someone who thinks that, when one door closes, another one opens?

Laura: Someone who always sees the light at the end of the tunnel?

Annabelle: If you answered yes to one or both of these questions, good for you!

Laura: We are not those people.

Annabelle: Nope. I'm Annabelle Gurwitch, and I'm a... "You know that other door opening? It probably leads to a broom closet," kind of person.

Laura: And I'm Laura House. When I see a light at the end of a tunnel, I assume it's a train headed right toward me!

Annabelle: Laura and I have created a brand-new podcast for people like us.

Laura: It's called Tiny Victories.

Annabelle: We're sharing personal tiny victories, or things we've read or seen that inspire resilience.

Laura: So, if you're looking for a tiny reason to get out of bed each week, subscribe to Tiny Victories.

Annabelle: Available on Maximum Fun, or wherever you get your podcasts.

Laura: Let's get tiny!

--

[dramatic music plays]

Mark: We interrupt the podcast you're listening to to tell you about another podcast. That's right – We Got This with Mark and Hal.

Hal: That's correct, Mark. This is Hal. We do the hard work for you – settling all of the meaningless arguments you have with your friends.

Mark: So, tune in every week on the Maximum Fun network for We Got This with Mark and Hal, and all your questions will be asked and answered.

Hal: You're welcome.

Mark: Alright, that's enough of that.

--

Travis: Okay, we got some questions. This is from Joe. Or maybe Johnny. I can't tell.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "Fondue. How does that work?" So, on our episode of Bake On, the chocolate week... um, Teresa and I do a podcast where we watch and discuss the newest season of Great British Bake Off. We did some chocolate fondue in there.

Here's the thing that you may not know. Because I felt silly looking it up, but I googled like, 'fondue recipe.' Because in my brain, I was like, "Just melt some chocolate." That is not it.

Teresa: That doesn't work, right? Because if you have melted chocolate, you have to keep it very hot in order to keep it melted.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: So, it would just— if you just melted like, a candy bar in the microwave, it would be melty, but it would also be hot. And then, as it would cool, it would become solid again.

Travis: That's right. And so, you have to add some like, milk to it, or cream or something, so it's a little creamier. Uh, and with the recipe I used, it was dark chocolate and cream, and like, a little bit of sea salt. So it had like, a salty element to it, and it was very good.

But then, the nice thing about that is, it still will cool in like, the refrigerator.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: So even if you don't use all of it, right? I poured mine into like, some pumpkin molds I had so it didn't go to waste. And then, you can either melt it again, or just eat it like chocolate bar.

Teresa: So um, this— the recipe that people use for chocolate fondue is often— is very close to ganache, right? Which is just cream and chocolate. And usually, for chocolate fondue, obviously, you try and serve it warm if you can. And you just add a little more cream than you would for ganache that you would like, put on a cake.

Travis: There you go. And then you just dip things in it. You can dip bread in the chocolate, you can dip, uh, I don't know... fruit, marshmallows, all kinds of things.

Um, let's see. This is from Winter. "Can I give my friends chocolate boxes in a non-romantic way? How would I go about this?" I think you would have to pick a non-heart-shaped one.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: And I think it would have to be for an occasion. 'Cause that's the thing with giving chocolate boxes for romantic reasons. And I— okay. I think that this is a, uh, I don't know if stigma is the right word?

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: But like, giving chocolate boxes for romantic reasons is like... I did this for no reason except I was thinking of you. Which is not a terrible thing to do for a friend, except that that's not the precedent.

Teresa: I think that one of the things you can do... like you said, make sure that it's not a heart-shaped box, if that's not your intention. But also, you

can buy like... fun chocolate-coated things. One of my favorite things to give people, I love to give Mike Sells and Esther Price, which is a— which are both Ohio-based companies. They do a partnership where they dip potato chips in chocolate.

Travis: It's incredible. If you've never had chocolate-dipped potato chips, they're wonderful.

Teresa: It is so good. And that is a box of chocolates that I would give to anybody for any reason at any time. Also, buy for myself.

Travis: Yes. Um, this is from Matthew. "Temper, not temper? When even do it, and why?" So, tempering chocolate is that, when you melt it, uh, you are melting it and cooling it in such a way that it has a really kind of glossy finish.

Teresa: You're rearranging the crystals of the whole thing, right? So, it— when a chocolate is out of temper, it looks kind of cloudy, right? But it's because the crystals are—

Travis: But it tastes the same.

Teresa: Yeah. And that's different from the bloom of a chocolate, which may make a chocolate taste a little chalkier. And that has to do with the fats separating in the chocolate.

Travis: If you ever see like, old chocolate, like something that's been sitting in your cabinet for a while or whatever, and then you open it, and it looks like it has kind of like, whitish or paler color, almost like snowflakes or flowers or something?

Teresa: And it also looks kind of dusty.

Travis: Yeah, then it's bloomed, and that means that it separated. And I don't know that you would like, get poisoned from eating it?

Teresa: No, it just doesn't taste as good.

Travis: Yeah. Um, but so, temper is like if you're going to like, use it, uh, y'know, to dip something in, or to like, pour over a cake, or baked goods or whatever, and you want a really glossy finish. You can temper your chocolate. But I will say, as someone who, like, does a lot of home baking... if I'm just like, making it for us to eat, I usually just like, pop it into the refrigerator to let it cool so we can eat it faster.

Teresa: Right. Because again, it has to do with the crystals, and it has to hit a certain temperature of melting point, and then it has to hit a certain temperature of cooling point.

Travis: And cool slow enough. You don't want to do it fast, because then—yeah.

Teresa: It does— it changes the way that the chocolate looks. It doesn't change the way the chocolate tastes.

Travis: Right. Um, so, this is from @NotYourMemily. "Is it true that in other countries, American chocolate has to be marked as 'chocolate-flavored candy' because the cocoa content isn't high enough?"

Teresa: Different, um... different principalities have different measures of what they call 'chocolate' and 'chocolate flavor', and it really just depends on what they've decided. Y'know, that's what I was talking about, about like, the British candy in the EU. And so, here in the US, we do have distinction between chocolate and chocolate flavoring. Chocolate-flavored candies. And wherever you go, that nation also has theirs, y'know?

Travis: Um, Kelly asks, "How bad is it really for dogs?" So, the thing about it is, as we've been talking about, different chocolate has different content for it. So like, y'know, if your dog is eating white chocolate, it's not as bad as like, super dark chocolate. It depends on the size of the dog, how much they ate, all of that stuff. For some dogs, um, y'know, it can be like, super bad allergy, or uh, it can be nothing.

Y'know, the thing is, it's just a really unpredictable reaction. But the answer is, it's not good. It is not good for dogs. And whether that means, y'know, your doggy eats an M&M, are they gonna be fine? Yeah, probably, right? It would take a lot more than that. But... why risk that?

Now, here's what you can do, because we have— so, Buttercup is a very good girl. Dot com.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And Lilly... Lilly, uhh...

Teresa: Lilly is a goober.

Travis: She is a goon, and she will eat anything she can reach. So—

Teresa: She's a notorious counter surfer. Because she is quite large. She's a 50-pound shepherd mix. Um, and so—

Travis: 50 pounds, maybe, when we got her. Since she's been eating, uh, chocolate chip cookies, more like 60 pounds.

Teresa: [laughs] Uh, so she can put her paws right up on the countertop, and uh, get pretty much anything we leave out.

Travis: And she does!

Teresa: She has a penchant for chocolate chip cookies.

Travis: She enjoys chocolate chip cookies. So, we have had to induce vomiting a couple times. [laughs] You can do it with hydrogen peroxide, like, a capful of hydrogen peroxide, and get that right outta there. Um, but yeah.

Teresa: But like we said, she's over 50 pounds. So, if she eats one chocolate chip cookie, she might just have a little bit of an uncomfortable poop. But the more that she ingests, the more imperative it is that we, um, void her.

Travis: Here's what I will say, because I don't want to make it sound like we are downplaying it. It is a risk for dogs, and it is bad. If your dog has ingested chocolate, you should contact a veterinarian. Right?

Teresa: There are also calculators available online that tell you, um, according to how many grams of chocolate, how large the dog is, and y'know, all of those calculators also say, now, if you have any problems with vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, swelling, any of those things, do contact your vet.

Travis: Also, grapes are very bad for dogs. That's not a chocolate thing. It's just true.

Teresa: It's like high sugar content or something, right? Anyway.

Travis: This is from Ann. "Is it more polite to eat figural chocolate from the feet, or the head?"

Teresa: Um... hmm.

Travis: I usually start with head. Here's my thought.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: I want to put them out of their misery right away, instead of them having to deal with me eating them from the bottom up, right? If someone was eating me, right? If there was a giant eating me...

Teresa: [laughs] You would want them to get it over with.

Travis: Yeah! Right? 'Cause if they start at my feet, I'm still totally there for that, right?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And I have to deal with it. If they go for my head first, it's done. Now it's just them eating me.

Teresa: Okay, here is the, quote, "polite and proper" way. Uh, it's— you're supposed to break it off with your hands into small, manageable pieces that you can put in your mouth. It doesn't really matter if you start with head or feet or whatever the figure is. You're supposed to break it apart and eat it that way. Um, but... eat whatever— however you want. Like—

Travis: Start with the head.

Teresa: Try not to make a mess, I guess? Or make a mess, if that's what you like.

Travis: Go for the head. Okay! This is from Catalina. "Can you talk about ruby chocolate? I've seen it on Great British Bake Off, and I'm curious about it."

Teresa: Okay, so ruby chocolate is a new variety of chocolate that was introduced in 2017 by a Belgian Swiss cocoa company. A lot of it has to do with marketing. Although, it is a— it does have a natural pink color, because it's like, a different botanical kind of like, chocolate bean. Cacao bean. And most people say it's reminiscent of kind of like, a berry chocolate. Kind of white chocolate and raspberries, most people describe it as.

And it's actually still debated whether or not it's *really* chocolate, or if it's just a clever marketing strategy to capitalize on the millennial pink trend, right?

Travis: Okay, along— if you say "real chocolate," next question...

Teresa: Ooh.

Travis: This is from BloopDeBlee. "Opinions on white chocolate: is it really chocolate, or does it just sneak by?"

Teresa: Um, so, it doesn't contain cocoa solids. It just contains cocoa butter.

Travis: And sugar. Lots of sugar.

Teresa: And sugar. So, um... here's the— like... is it chocolate? [pause] I don't know.

Travis: [snorts] That is the question, yes.

Teresa: [laughs] Well, it does contain some of the ingredients that are chocolate.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: But since it doesn't have any cocoa solids, it behaves totally different from other chocolates. It doesn't quite taste very much like chocolate. I... maintain it's not chocolate.

Travis: Okay. I am a sucker for branding, and it says chocolate right there in the name, so who am I to argue? One last question. This is from Dr. Brims. "If there is a bowl of candies – chocolate candies – on a table, how many are you allowed to take?"

Teresa: Uh, depends on the size. So, you can take— so, if it's a full size, that's one. Okay, full size bar. If it's like, fun sized, I would say two or three.

Travis: What if it's like, M&Ms?

Teresa: If it's like M&Ms, you can take however many fit in a handful.

Travis: Okay. Hey, folks? If you put out a bowl of candy, put a little spoon or something in it if it's M&Ms, or if there's no wrapper on it. Put a little spoon or something so people don't have to reach their hands in. That's gross, okay?

Teresa: Well, I assumed that it was you and I sharing a bowl of candy.

Travis: I mean, okay, but I'm saying like, if you're at a party, and there's just like, some candy on the table, put a spoon or something in.

Teresa: Oh, yeah. Yes. So, you may take at a time, as many as fit in whatever the scooping device may be.

Travis: There should be a scooping device is what I'm saying.

Teresa: Because I mean, otherwise, if you're gonna take two or three scoops, we might as well just take the bowl, right? [laughs]

Travis: And hey, maybe just take the bowl. Okay, before we wrap up...

Teresa: Mm-hmm?

Travis: You have some etiquette. Some actionable, actual, factual, snactual etiquette.

Teresa: Ohh! That one, I did like!

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Okay, so. I would like to entreat everyone to— ha ha, entreat.

Travis: M'kay.

Teresa: Entreat everyone to buy a quality, uh, fair trade chocolate bar, and really enjoy it. Use all your senses, look at the bar, you can rub it a little bit to warm it up.

Travis: Listen to the bar.

Teresa: To smell it. It usually smells quite delicious.

Travis: Rub it on your skin.

Teresa: I guess. If that's what you're into. And y'know, break off pieces. Turn it into a full sensory experience. Um, if you let it melt on your tongue, it should slowly melt, and y'know, it should have several flavors bloom across your palate, much like wine, or whiskey, or y'know, other things. You can do a chocolate tasting the same way you do other things.

Um, I also want to talk a little bit about chocolate box sharing.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um... don't be super picky about it. If the chocolate box has several layers in it, it is considered polite, the etiquette is, to finish one layer before you remove the plastic and go for the next layer.

Travis: Unless you're eating it all at home by yourself. And then, go for it.

Teresa: And then go for it. If you are in public... not in public. If you are, y'know, publically sharing, I suppose, this chocolate box, box o' chocolates... y'know, don't go diggin' through it. Also, take your wrappers out. Don't throw the wrapper back in the box. That's a mess.

Um, and uh, sometimes, somebody's gonna take the chocolate you wanted. It's okay.

Travis: That's fine. Maybe find a new chocolate that you didn't know you wanted.

Teresa: All chocolate is good chocolate.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So, y'know, enjoy your socialism in a box of chocolates.

Travis: Okay. That's gonna do it for us, folks. First and foremost, thank you, Alex. You really helped us out this week.

Teresa: Oh yeah.

Travis: We couldn't do it without our researcher, Alex, so thank you so much. Also, uh, the McElroys have written a podcasting book, and I include all McElroys there, because I think our dad did the foreword, and Rachel and Teresa and Sydnee did a chapter about research, and... I mean, mostly me and my brothers wrote it. I mean, *mostly* me and Justin and Griffin wrote it. And it's very good. It'll teach you how to make a podcast you're proud of, and we put jokes in it, so you'll laugh.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And learn, and love. So, uh, you can preorder that now at TheMcElroyPodcastBook.com. It's called *Everybody Has a Podcast (Except You)*. Also, book four of The Adventure Zone graphic novel series, *The Crystal Kingdom*, is available for preorder. You can go to TheAdventureZoneComic.com and preorder that there.

Go check out all the wonderful stuff at McElroyMerch.com. Thank you to Max Fun, our podcast home. Uh, 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. You can reach us @ShmannersCast, and that's where we got all of these great questions.

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

We are still always taking topic suggestions at our email, ShmannersCast@gmail.com. Also, send in your idioms. We love doing those idiom episodes, and we are specifically looking for some... y'know, ones that maybe we had never heard of, so...

Travis: Maybe non-US idioms.

Teresa: Non-US idioms! Love it.

Travis: And 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]

MaximumFun.org

Comedy and culture.

Artist owned.

Audience supported.