

Shmanners 250: Idioms: Pt. 6

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Travis: You need to get your sausages in a row to save nine.

Teresa: That doesn't mean anything. 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: I'm well.

Travis: Yeah? You had a good night's sleep?

Teresa: Yeah, not bad.

Travis: Good. Huh?

Teresa: A little stuffy.

Travis: [high-pitched] A little stuffy, you said?

Teresa: Who isn't, these days?

Travis: Oh, these days. Oh, everyone's got the snuffleupagus. The snuffies. So, we're talking another about idioms. I think this is idiom episode six?

Teresa: I believe so. And the thing is, y'all keep sending them and I love it.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So do it. Keep sending them. Because I think that the way that we speak, the way that we communicate, really does kind of shape our—what is it, our relationship with the world? So, we—I, particularly, use a lot of idioms in my life, and it's important that we know what they mean, because I've used some of these and found myself surprised.

Travis: Well, and not just that, I recently have been trying to learn French as best I can. It is a, I would say, a beautiful language with a bizarre set of rules.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And the thing is is, like, a lot of those rules are a lot more straightforward in English, except when it comes to, like, turns of phrases, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Where it's just like, wait. What does that mean? Like, we have so many sayings that we just take for granted, the kind of quote-unquote, "inherent meaning" to them.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: And when you actually look at them for longer than two seconds, they don't mean anything. Alright! So give me the first one.

Teresa: Here's the first one—

Travis: Just give me the phrase, I'll try to tell you what it means, alright?

Teresa: This was suggested by Kaya. "Three sheets to the wind."

Travis: Okay, so, this is, "You're drunk."

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: I know that. There is a great show hosted by Zane Lamprey where he would go to different countries and kind of experience their drinking culture. So like, if they had a local liquor, or if they had like, hangover cures, or drinking games or whatever, he would go and it was kind of a travel show slash drinking show. It was called *Three Sheets*.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: I have no idea why it's that; can I guess?

Teresa: Oh, okay, I thought that—

Travis: I'm gonna guess it's a sailing thing.

Teresa: It sure is.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: But you need to know exactly what the sheet is.

Travis: The sail?

Teresa: Nope.

Travis: Oh, see, that's what I thought it was.

Teresa: Yeah, I did, too. So, a sheet actually refers to the rope or chain that is attached to the bottom corner of a sail. So, this was a rigging that was vital to keeping the sail in place, and if it became undone or, quote, "lost to the wind," the sail would be at the mercy of the wind and, you know, go off-course.

Travis: Okay, so, if all three of your sheets are to the wind, I guess you're just wobbling all over the place.

Teresa: Exactly, and it would stagger around the sea, perhaps like a drunken sailor.

Travis: I see! See, I always—I would have assumed it was like, about the sheet was the sail and the wind is blowing it all over, I guess. But this makes a lot more sense.

Teresa: It does, actually, in the way that I never thought that a sail didn't make sense. But when you hear the one that *is* right, it's like, of course that's right.

Travis: Yeah, of course that's right, of course that's it. Okay, what's the next one?

Teresa: Next one is suggested by Alex! 'Cause she's a curious kid.

Travis: Yeah. I mean, she's a full blown adult, but I understand.

Teresa: Well, yes.

Travis: Cash cow.

Teresa: Cash cow.

Travis: Okay. Now, I know a cash cow is like—so, if you wanted to think about like, a cash cow, would be like, you know, Nike for example, right? They have sweat suits and clothing and a lot of branding, but the cash cow is like, the shoes. I think is it—

Teresa: Eh... To play in your French, *comme çï, comme ça*.

Travis: Because I'm trying to—it's not *my* French.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I'm trying not to use other idioms, but the first thing I thought of was "goose who laid the golden egg" or like, "cash crop."

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Uh, but it's like, your cash cow is like, "This is the thing that's gonna make us money."

Teresa: Exactly. I think that the operative term is that *easily* makes a lot of money.

Travis: Right, right, right.

Teresa: So you don't have to do a ton of work for a lot of return. Surprise! This is in reference to dairy cows. So, many farms would specialize in dairy cows, because milk production produced a steady stream of income without calling you to do a lot of work. I mean, other than take care of the cow.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So, you don't have to plow a field to put a cow in it and get the milk.

Travis: I mean, yes. But arguably, I would say that dairy farmers were doing a lot more work than, say, anybody else. [laughs] I don't know the day-to-day work that goes into it, but I guarantee they're working harder than I am.

Teresa: I mean, now that having a dairy farm means that you probably have several hundred head of cattle.

Travis: And their butts, too. If you just have the heads, no milk's coming out of there.

Teresa: So, I think that—

Travis: Nothing? I thought I'd get a chuckle.

Teresa: Getting it easier, would probably relate to people who had a few cows.

Travis: Okay. Gotcha, gotcha, gotcha.

Teresa: Alright, this one is from Hannah B. "Close only counts in horseshoes and hand grenades."

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: I have heard this switched, hand grenades and horseshoes.

Travis: Well, so, this is like, if you said to somebody, "well, I was close!" And they'd be like, "well, that doesn't count. Close only counts in horseshoes and hand grenades." And I assume this has to do with, like, there is a point scoring in horseshoes, like throwing horseshoes. Or like, the closest to the point, gets it. And hand grenades, you don't have to be accurate because there's a big explosion.

Teresa: Right, exactly. Being nearly successful at something, doesn't mean you were successful at something.

Travis: Right, right, right. Like, if you tried to land on the moon, and you went past it and you're like, "But I got really close to the moon!"

Teresa: [laughs] That means you didn't succeed...

Travis: Well, you didn't do it.

Teresa: ... in landing on the moon. Okay, um, and it's actually pretty modern. The first person to ever say it was legendary baseball manager, Frank Robinson. In an interview, he said—the full quote is, "Close don't count in baseball. Close only counts in horseshoes and hand grenades." So, he meant it literally, obviously, because like you said, in horseshoes, you get points for tha, and you know, hand grenades explode no matter what you hit.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So, Time magazine printed this phrase in their 1973 interview, and it's just, you know—

Travis: It's very folksy and wonderful.

Teresa: Sure is.

Travis: Evocative.

Teresa: Indeed.

Travis: Evocative. Okay, what's the next one?

Teresa: The next one is by Amanda C. "The pot calling the kettle black."

Travis: Okay, now this is—I recently had someone rip this wide open for me in a way that I never fully understood. But this is... the saying means, you would say it, like, if somebody blamed somebody or said like, "That person is rude."

And it's like, well, no, you're the rude person, and you have no right to call them out for it, because you do it, too.

Teresa: Yes, because you do it all the time, right? Accusing someone of doing something that you do, all the time. And I think that it is fair to say that one worries that this might be of racist origins, but it seems that it is literal.

Okay, so it dates all the way back to the medieval period when cooking items were frequently made out of cast iron.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: It was fashion at the time to use clever wordplay in novels and plays and, you know, things like that. And because black cast iron was a

staple of many a medieval kitchen, Cervantes thought it would be a clever phrase to include in his epic book, Don Quixote.

Travis: I have heard of this, yes.

Teresa: Over time, the phrase has evolved into different shorthand, like "takes one to know one" or "pot, meet kettle" or things like this. It also goes on. I mean, Shakespeare used it and other famous writer people.

Travis: I heard somebody recently talk about how nowadays—and I mean, I've always thought about it as, they were both black cast iron, right? So they're both equally bad? But, I used the phrase recently and somebody said that it means, like, how a kettle is usually polished, and a pot is usually the cast iron. So it's seeing its reflection in it.

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: And I'm like, that makes sense to me, too.

Teresa: Sure. This one is Amanda C. again. "Beat around the bush."

Travis: Okay. I know that what it means is, you would say it like, if somebody isn't getting to the point of what they're trying to ask. Like, they came to ask you for money, and they're just like, "Yeah, it's just great to see you, and oh, it's good weather." And you're like, "Okay, just stop beating around the bush and get to it." But I have no idea where it comes from.

Teresa: That's exactly right. And, again, medieval idiom. It's a hunting tactic.

Travis: Okay?

Teresa: So, during medieval times, hunters hired men to literally beat the area around bushes with sticks in order to flush out the game that could be hiding in there. It was important to never hit the bushes directly, because, I mean, not only could you maybe hit or make the animal mad, but it was not uncommon for someone to accidentally smack a bee's nest.

Travis: Oh, boy!

Teresa: [through laughter] Yeah. So, beating around the bush is, you know, great for hunting, but not good for conversation.

Travis: It is literally because you don't want to hit the bush directly, so you're beating around the bush in conversation, because you don't want to hit the bush directly, which is—it's so rare to find an idiom where it is so literally, one-to-one describing...

Teresa: Right, 'cause you don't want to hit the bush right on, because there might be a bee's nest in it, just like you don't want to say the thing right on because it might be uncomfortable.

Travis: Right. That's incred—I don't know why that's blowing my mind so much, the idea that it would be so directly related to it. I've never thought about that before. Well, I didn't know what it means, so. ..

Teresa: I didn't know either.

Travis: Why *would* I think about it before?

Teresa: I mean, we knew what it meant, but we didn't know—

Travis: But did we know what it capital-m...

Travis and Teresa: Meant?

Teresa: No.

Travis: No.

Teresa: Let's do one more. Before break.

Travis: Okay, I was gonna say, we're only like 11 minutes in.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: The shortest *Shmanners* ever.

Teresa: This is from Kaya again. "Donkey's years."

Travis: Donkey's *years*? Y-E-A-R-S?

Teresa: Uh-huh.

Travis: Not only do I not know where that's from, I've never heard that before.

Teresa: I think I've heard it in a different way, like... Let's see. Something like—I can't recall it. Something about eons. Anyway, here's the meaning. A very long time. Okay?

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: For example, we've been friends for a donkey's years. This is a British idiom.

Travis: Okay, now I feel less bad about not having heard it.

Teresa: [laughs] It's probably a variation of 1920s slang.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: You know, the um. [English accent] "Apples and pears. Bob's your uncle."

Travis: [bad English accent] "'Ello, 'ello." That's not it.

Teresa: [laughs] Things like that, right? Back then, donkey's ears was rhyming slang for years, implying that something took a long time because donkey ears are so famously long. Like, that Nestor the Long-Eared Donkey—

Travis: The Long-Eared Christmas Donkey?

Teresa: Christmas Donkey.

Travis: That fool.

Teresa: Yeah. I mean, that's the idea.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And so it's assumed that over time, the word "ears" morphed into "years," which actually makes it make a little more sense to me, because... it's long?

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: It's talking about time? You know?

Travis: It's interesting, right? Because we also say, like, dog years.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: So we would say, like—or dog's age. I've heard that here, maybe—

Teresa: There it is! I think's what it—a dog's age, I think is what I've heard.

Travis: Where I've heard someone say like, "I haven't seen you in a dog's age." Because dogs age differently from humans. Oh, fun fact! Can I share a fun fact?

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Dogs! People talk about dog years as like, one human year is seven dog years, right? And what they're talking about is how a dog ages. But, actually, dogs don't age in that regular a fashion, just like humans don't.

Teresa: It isn't evenly like that.

Travis: Right. If you think about the difference between a 10-year-old kid and a 20-year-old adult, versus the difference between a 40-year-old and a 50-year-old...

Teresa: Right.

Travis: ... there's a different growth there. So dogs actually age, like, 10 years in the first year, 9 years in the second year, 8 years in the second year. And then by the time they're like four, they then just age like, five years, comparatively to humans. So it's not just like, seven-seven-seven-seven-seven, it's much more frontloaded than that.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: That has nothing to do with idioms. Just an interesting thing.

Teresa: Well, donkeys have a fairly long lifespan for an animal. Like, 30 years or something. So, I mean, that also maybe contributes to the idiom.

Travis: Oh, and you know what else?

Teresa: What?

Travis: It's time to say a thank you note to our sponsors!

[theme music plays]

Travis: This week, we want to write a thank you note to Function of Beauty. We've all got goals: be healthy, find work-life balance, improve a relationship. But have you thought about your hair goals? Gosh knows I have.

I've been working on hair goals since I was, like, four years old. And you know, the thing that I did not know I was missing until I was far too old was realizing that, no matter how I styled it, if I didn't have the right product, it just wasn't going to work. And this is one of the reasons I love Function of Beauty, because not only does Function of Beauty make amazing products, they make amazing products that are personalized for you.

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We also want to write a thank you note to Sunbasket. Here in our house, you know we got these two kids, we got two dogs, we got two adults, we have one kitty, and sometimes it's really easy for dinner planning to get away from us. Oh, boy, are there ever moments where Teresa and I look at each other and moments before dinner needs to be ready, we say, "Oh, no. What are we going to do for dinner?"

That's why having Sunbasket in the fridge is so amazing, because you probably already know about Sunbasket as a meal subscription service that sends you all the ingredients you need. But, did you know they can also help you get dinner on the table quickly without having to sacrifice nutrition and quality? Because now, Sunbasket has fresh and ready meals that are just \$8.99, and they are good for your body and your budget.

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yogurt, creamy mushroom penne with baby spinach and almonds. All of those sound amazing and my mouth is watering.

So right now, Sunbasket is offering \$35 off your first order when you go right now to Sunbasket.com/Shmanners and enter promo code "Shmanners" at checkout. That's Sunbasket.com/Shmanners and enter promo code "Shmanners" at checkout for \$35 off your order. Sunbasket.com/Shmanners and enter promo code "Shmanners."

Travis: Okay. What's the next idiom?

Teresa: Alright. Let's keep on trucking. Heath.

Travis: "Keep on trucking!"

Teresa: Oh! Idiom.

Travis: Yep.

Teresa: Heath R. submitted "a beef."

Travis: "A beef." To have a beef with.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: That one might beef. I—

Teresa: I think that we—okay. To have beef is what we're going to single out on. Because I've also heard "beefed," meaning fallen or—

Travis: "Oh, I beefed it." Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah. "I've done a bad job."

Travis: I—that might just be something me and my brothers say. I don't know if that's a real thing, outside of McElroy parlance.

Teresa: Who knows?

Travis: I beefed it. But to *have* beef, is to be—to have a rivalry or to have some kind of grudge against people, and I don't know if it originated with this, but like I know that it was made famous by, like, the rap scene and by like, gang culture, I think?

Teresa: [doubting] Mmm... mmm...

Travis: That is primarily where I—

Teresa: Mm...

Travis: No, hold on. Hold on, Teresa's saying, giving me a face like I'm wrong. What is it?

Teresa: There are a couple of Ted points for this. Uh, firstly, we think that it's probably more likely that this is a—that "beef" became slang for "to complain" in the U.S. around the time of the first World War, because it's thought that the term originated from complains by soldiers about the poor quantity or quality of beef rations on the battlefield.

Travis: So that point, I guess it would be like, the literal translation would be "to take issue with."

Teresa: Right.

Travis: "To have issue with someone."

Teresa: Another possibility is that it dates all the way back to 1800s London. Apparently, crying "hot beef" rhymes with "stop, thief" and that was a common way for people to raise alarm to a shady situation. So, over time, "beef"—

Travis: No, sorry, hold on. Hold on. To be clear, what you're saying is rather yell, "stop, thief," they would yell, "hot beef," and people would have been like, "Hm! Something nefarious! Either something nefarious is going on, or that guy is selling hot beef!"

Teresa: [laughs] But over time, "beef" became equated with shouting, thus morphing into the description of an argument.

Travis: Ehh, I side with the first one more, I think.

Teresa: I do, too. I do, too.

Travis: Hot beef. "Hot beef? Oh, no, he's in trouble or he's hungry!"
[laughs] I love that. I love it.

Teresa: Next one from—

Travis: "Hot beef!"
"What's wrong?"
"No, it's just my beef burnt my tongue."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "This beef is hot!"

Teresa: Are you done?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: From Jocelyn P. "Red herring."

Travis: Okay, so I know that this is a very popular term in murder mysteries...

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: ... in whodunits specifically, where a red herring is a term used for a clue given that seems important, but actually has no impact on the case.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: So, it might be like, "Oh, they found that cigarette butt with the lipstick on it!" And then they mention that, like six or seven times, but then

it's just, like, "Oh, that was just there because this person smokes that kind of cigarette the day before it. It actually is not a clue to the case at all."

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: But it's usually used by writers to distract the reader and not make it too easy to solve the case, so the detective probably knows it's not important, but you, the reader, might get really hung up on it.

Teresa: Perhaps. So, herring, if you don't know, is a small fish native to the north Atlantic, and they turn red when you smoke them, which is how most people eat them.

There was an abundance of them, long ago in New England, and the settlers would go, would take them with them when hunting and would leave these fish along the trail that they were taking, because the strong fish smell would confuse the wolves that might want to follow the hunting party...

Travis: [disbelief] What?

Teresa: ... and steal the kill.

Travis: So... it was literally... misdirecting clues!

Teresa: Right, laying a false trail.

Travis: Oh, my goodness gracious! This is right up there with beating around the bush!

Teresa: Sure is!

Travis: It's literally, a red herring is literally a clue left behind to distract someone who might be following, like a case.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: This is incredible and I can't get my voice to lower an octave!

Teresa: [laughs] How about another one from Jocelyn?

Travis: I'm losing it. Okay.

Teresa: Alright. Let's see if this one is as literal. "A wild goose chase."

Travis: Okay. So this is being, like, if somebody sent you to get something, but they did not expect you to actually be able to achieve, or sent you on, let's say an errand. Like, if they said, "Oh, I want you to go get me this special kind of pastry," when you know nowhere in town sells that pastry.

Teresa: Okay, yeah. A pointless pursuit of something.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Right. And I've also heard this as like, kind of a time waster type idea, like a snipe hunt?

Travis: Sure, sure, sure.

Teresa: 'Cause there's no such thing as a snipe, right?

Travis: Yeah.

[beat of silence]

Teresa: I thought you would have a story or something.

Travis: You think I've been on a snipe hunt before?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: What kind of—hey!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: What kind of person do you think I am? I've never been on a hunt, let alone snipe hunt.

Teresa: Alright, anyway.

Travis: If someone said, "hey, do you wanna a snipe?" I'd be like, "No. Video games exist."

Teresa: [laughs] This—

Travis: Could I be napping instead? Thank you!

Teresa: Alright, this phrase probably comes from horses.

Travis: Wait.

Teresa: Probably—

Travis: Not geese?

Teresa: Not geese. Some sort of 16th century horse racing slang. Back then, the wild goose chase was a race in which the lead rider would be pursued by the other riders in a sort of V-shape—

Travis: Oh, like a flying V for geese.

Teresa: Yep, that geese normally fly in. So, over time it meant a race or pursuit where the leader was already set or the outcome already determined. So you already knew what was going to happen, right? And this is illustrated in *Romeo and Juliet*...

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: ... where Mercutio uses the phrase to describe Romeo's jokes, right? 'Cause he already knows the punch lines.

Travis: Okay. Got it, got it, got it.

Teresa: So, I guess it's less like a—I mean, it is kind of a pointless pursuit, right? Because if you're chasing the lead horse and you know you're not gonna beat him... I don't know.

Travis: It seems to me like there would be a potential though, where if it was like, "This is the fastest horse. Get out there." And then like, your horse wins and everybody's like, "Oh, wow. What a wild goose upset."

Teresa: Indeed. An upset goose.

Travis: An upset goose. Or, is it at that point, a tame goose? 'Cause the wild goose lost and a tame goose won?

Teresa: Hm.

Travis: I don't know, do you think that there's ever a time when actual geese are flying in a V, and one of the geese is like, back on one of the sides and is like, "I wanna be up there. Hey, Doug! Can we trade?" and Doug's like, "You don't know the way there!" I'm like, "*You* don't know the way there, Doug! We're both geese!"

Teresa: They do trade, in fact but they trade—

Travis: Well, that doesn't work for the joke, though, does it?

Teresa: Right, they trade because the hardest place to be is at the top of that V, because the other places are drafting from the first goose.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: So, if they're flying a long time and they have the first goose, they trade out so that everybody gets a turn being the hardest part.

Travis: Yeah, but that doesn't work for the joke, though, does it? It doesn't work—[sighs] But I'm just saying that—I wonder how big they can get, how about that?

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Do you think that there's lowercase and capital Vs?

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: Okay. Not even a chuckle. Alright.

Teresa: Here's one from Kimberly D. and her daughter Teagan. The phrase, "high-brow" and "low-brow."

Travis: So, this is—I usually hear it in relationship comedy.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: But I think it can go with a lot of things, where it's like, high-brow is usually a little more intellectual, a little more, maybe challenging, maybe even a little dryer? Where low-brow is a little bit more, like, if you're about comedy, think like slapstick or fart jokes, where it's a little sillier, it's a little more juvenile.

Teresa: Sure. So let's say, to condense that, that high-brow is fancy and refined.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Whereas low-brow is low-class or crass.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: So... Alex put in the notes here, that Kimberly and Teagan submitted it because they had an inkling that it was problematic, and they're kind of right. So, Dr. Franz Joseph Gall coined the phrase in 1875 because he was a phrenologist, okay? There's a really awesome *Sawbones* about this.

Travis: Phrenology is the study of the brain and believing that you can, like, diagnose, or like, predict—

Teresa: Not the brain, the skull.

Travis: Oh, sorry, the skull. That you can feel like bumps in the skull and ridges in the skull and be like, "Oh, that's why you're a good athlete or whatever."

Teresa: Well, not only that, but it indicated intelligence.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: Right?

Travis: And this was used by people, right, to say like, "Well that's why this race is superior, because of the shape of their skull compared to this other race whose skull isn't shaped that way." Blah, blah, blah.

Teresa: Indeed. Uh, he came up with the theory that people with higher foreheads were more intelligent than people with low foreheads.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Let me guess— I bet he had a high forehead. Just a guess.

Teresa: [laughs] And guess what? Back then, it was common for, um, racists to depict African-Americans with lower foreheads.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: So it's not a big leap to think about how this completely incorrect pseudoscience could have been used to persecute the Black community.

Travis: [disgusted] Ugh. Okay.

Teresa: So, you know, maybe don't use it anymore.

Travis: Yeah, maybe let's stop using that one.

Teresa: Alright. Here is—[laughs] Here is a heading that Alex calls "idioms from all over the world, or just from people's cute grandmas."

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: [laughs] Aw, man. She's great. Okay, so. An Austrian idiom from Diana was, "Das ist nicht mein bier."

Travis: "That is not my beer?"

Teresa: Exactly. Meaning, "That's not my problem."

Travis: Oh, okay! I like that! And you could put that with, "This is sausage to me and that's not my beer." You know what I mean? Like, "Hey man, do you want to drink this beer? Do you care? This is sausage to me. That's not my beer."

Teresa: Not my beer. Amanda C., you know in addition to giving us some great idiom suggestions, included the German version of stop beating around the bush, which is, "Rede nicht um den heißen brei herum."

Travis: I have no idea. What's—translate that please?

Teresa: "Stop talking around the hot mash."

Travis: Huh. Okay.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: But it means the same thing?

Teresa: Yeah, yeah, it does.

Travis: Do you think it's about mashed potatoes?

Teresa: I mean, I hope it's about mashed potatoes.

Travis: Okay. Mash is also what you use, I believe in making whiskey, but I don't think it's that.

Teresa: No, beer, right? Whiskey and beer. In concocting brews.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Jessie P.'s grandma used to describe something moving very quickly as, "like a chicken on a June bug."

Travis: Huh. Okay. Mm. Now, you know what I bet that is?

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: That is not a chicken riding a June bug. That is a chicken chasing a June bug to eat it.

Teresa: Yes. Yes, I think so.

Travis: Where my brain first went, though...

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: ... was the image of a chicken riding a June bug. "Whee!"

Teresa: Standing on a tiny bug? [laughs] I don't think that would go very fast, though.

Travis: No, but in my mind? It was funny, and fast, and a little erratic, and I was enjoying it immensely.

Teresa: Here's a nice list—

Travis: Have I ever said the one my dad used to say? Fine as a frog's hair?

Teresa: Oh, yes, you have said that.

Travis: On this show?

Teresa: But do talk about it again.

Travis: Well, because a frog's hair is so fine you can't even see it, so you're finer than a frog's hair. Or you're more nervous than a long-tailed cat in a room full of rocking chairs?

Teresa: Uh-huh. You said that one, too.

Travis: Yeah? 'Cause you don't want to get your tail squished.

Teresa: What about finer than a frog's hair split four ways?

Travis: [quietly] Yeah. I've never said that in my life.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Now throw your hat over the fence, have I talked about that one?

Teresa: Yeah, you have. We have.

Travis: Okay, wow, alright, alright, okay.

Teresa: You better think of some new ones. [laughs]

Travis: I can't just make up new folksy sayings from my childhood.

Teresa: What about—have we talked about fiddly-farting?

Travis: Fiddly-farting, I don't think that— I think just one time my dad couldn't think of the word farting, and we were like, fighting in the back seat I think, and he turned to us and said, "You boys stop fiddly-farting around back there!"

And we, all three, stopped and I said, "Fiddly-farting?" And he was like, "Don't. Just stop." And I'm like, "No, hold on. Fiddly-farting? What does that mean?" And we were all instantly very, just like, zoned in on like, "Oh, no, no, no. We're not fighting anymore. That's done. Tell me about fiddly-farting."

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: "Can you explain any of that to me?" But he was mad, and I think he was especially mad that he had said "fiddly-farting" and now we were kind of ribbing him. And he just wanted to be the mad dad. But instead, he said the phrase "fiddly-farting."

Teresa: This is from Rhiannon B. and these are some Australian slang. So, a pub is called a "boozer." That makes sense.

Travis: Yeah, that's dead on.

Teresa: "Squiz" means look, like, "take a squiz at this."

Travis: That's so fun!

Teresa: That is fun. And calling a sausage a "mystery bag."

Travis: Okay. [laughs]

Teresa: I mean, that does make sense, because don't ask how the sausage is made.

Travis: No, I get that, I get that, but if somebody says, "hey, do you want to eat a mystery bag?" It's far less appetizing. Far less appetizing. I was talking about this recently, because we have watched Dead Last straight through now, like 14 times.

And I'm sad that we have not, here in the U.S. of A. adopted the nicknaming convention that they do in Britain. Where if somebody's name is like Jerry or Barry or whatever, you could say like, "Jezza" or "Baz." Where they use the Z in there? I want that. I would like that.

Teresa: We'll file a complaint.

Travis: You could be, "Tez." I mean, in that—

Teresa: I could be.

Travis: 'Cause, Teresa, you could be Tez. I'm just saying, how fun is that?

Teresa: I mean, it's fun. I like it.

Travis: It's pretty fun. Okay.

Teresa: Um, here's the best one. The one that Alex liked the most and singled out. "A brown-eyed mullet."

Travis: Scuzi?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Say it again?

Teresa: Alex thought perhaps a "brown-eyed mullet" was a type of snake?

Travis: In a kind and benevolent universe, I thought of a kind of fish.

Teresa: Okay, yeah. That's closer than a snake.

Travis: [apprehensively] What is it? 'Cause there's so many terrible things it could be.

Teresa: [laughs] It's what you call a turd in the sea where you're swimming.

Travis: Aw, man.

Teresa: [laughs] Now, it does not go on to describe from whence the turd came, but I have to assume that if it's big enough for you to see it, it's probably a person turd.

Travis: I mean, I remember when this show used to be about etiquette and manners and not about turds.

Teresa: I mean, we have talked about farting before.

Travis: That's true. That's very true.

Teresa: Anyway, Nikola K. sent in some Scottish idioms, and I'm gonna try my best, because they actually wrote them out for us. So, "Dinnae teach yer granny te suck eggs."

Travis: Don't teach your granny to suck eggs?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Don't give advice that you already have. So, don't give advice to me that I already have.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: "It's a sair ficht for half a loaf."

Travis: I don't know.

Teresa: Putting in a lot of effort and getting less of what you hope back.

Travis: Oh, okay. So that makes a lot of sense, so you're putting in a lot of work to get half a loaf back, right?

Teresa: Right. Yeah. And I've heard this one, "You make a better door than a windee."

Travis: Oh, I love that one. Usually when someone's standing betwixt you and the television.

Teresa: [laughs] Indeed. Um, here's a French one from Stephanie S. "Je donne ma langue au chat."

Travis: [whispers] I don't know.

Teresa: "I give my tongue to the cat."

Travis: What?

Teresa: Which means, "I give up" or "I'm done guessing."

Travis: Okay, so kind of like, cat's got your tongue, I'm gonna stop talking now.

Teresa: Uh, yeah. A little bit. A little bit. But like, so—it is related to the cat got your tongue, because the French phrase means, "I've nothing more to say."

Travis: Right, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Teresa: Right?

Travis: "I'm gonna stop talking now."

Teresa: Right, exactly. So even if the cat has got your tongue, because you can't think of anything to say, or you give your tongue to the cat, because you're done talking.

Travis: Alright! That's gonna do it for us. I love these. It's not my beer. It's not my beer!

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Goes right up there with me, now, I'm adding that one to...

Teresa: ... this is sausage to me?

Travis: This is sausage to me. That's gonna do it for us. Thank you, Alex, our researcher, without whom we would not be able to do this show and thank you to everyone who sent in idioms. If you have idioms, you can email us, asking us about. Email us at shmatterscast@gmail.com.

Teresa: Oh, what was the one? That we had? That we said?

Travis: Oh, keep on trucking?

Teresa: Keep on trucking.

Travis: Mm-hmm. Which I assume has to do with like, trucking.

Teresa: Cross-country deliveries.

Travis: Yeah. So, email us. We also have Twitter, [@shmatterscast](https://twitter.com/shmatterscast), and when we call for questions, that is where that will be. Let's see, thank you to Maximum Fun, our podcast home. Go check out all the other amazing shows there, and you can also go check out all the other McElroy projects at McElroy.family, as well as checking out all of the amazing merch at McElroyMerch.com. 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. Again, [@shmatterscast](https://twitter.com/shmatterscast). Thank you to Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover banner of our fan-run Facebook group, Shmatters Fanners. Go ahead and join that group if you love to give and get excellent advice from other fanners.

Travis: And that's gonna do it for us, so join us again next week.

Teresa: No RSVP required.

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

Teresa: Manners, *Shmanners*, get it?

[theme music plays]

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