

Shmanners 277: Idioms: Part 9

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Travis: [haltingly] Well, that's the way the bird with the moss crumbles!

Teresa: Not this again.

Travis: 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.

[soda can opens]

Teresa: Ohh! Rip it!

Travis: Grip and rip it. Yeah, grip it and rip it.

Teresa: Grip it? Grip it and rip it!

Travis: Sorry. I'm having a soda.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Trying to get that... just wanna get over that midday hump.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: It's a hump on— it's Wednesday, it's hump day.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: I got the yawns. I got the yawnies, [holding back laughter] the powerful yawnies.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: As they call 'em.

Teresa: So you cracked open a— a nice cold Coke Zero.

Travis: A Coke Zero Sugar. [laughs quietly] Because I want the flavor.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: But not those calories. [grumbles]

Teresa: Hmm. Well, there's a debate as to whether or not artificial sweeteners are actually good for you, or whether they cause cancer.

Travis: Man, that's the debate about everything, am I right? Chocolate, wine, what's the deal? [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Phones! In our pockets? What?! [sing-song] Microwaves! [beat] Cell towers. I don't know.

Teresa: [laughs] Okay. Alright. Well, so, uh, you may have guessed by the continued idiom-ness of the—

Travis: Well, they'd probably guess 'cause the—

Teresa: —opening joke?

Travis: —well, the title of the episode is, like, probably "Idioms, something something something."

Teresa: Yeah, it'll say idioms. And I do not know how many idioms episodes we've had so far.

Travis: Ten?! No.

Teresa: Hmm, I don't know.

Travis: Okay. A lot.

Teresa: A lot.

Travis: 'Cause we love 'em! And I think the thing that I have found, if I may for a moment—

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: —take a sidestep, uh, the thing that I found very interesting about this series about idioms is that idioms— one, they're culturally relevant because we use them a lot, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Like, so— but I also think that they're— sometimes they'll be, like, this peek into, like, history, or into, like, sociology, into, like, what people were doing at a certain time, what is important to people, what becomes the lexicon because of the timeliness of— like, I just think they're interesting on a deeper level of, like, "Why did this become a thing?"

Teresa: And how do they change over time?

Travis: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So, what's our first id-jum?

Teresa: First idiom! Suggested by Adam R.

Travis: Thank you, Adam R.

Teresa: "Don't rock the boat."

Travis: Now, thi— I know this! [singing] Ro— no, don't tip the boat over! [speaking] Okay, you guys didn't see it—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —but Teresa said, "Don't rock the boat," and then pointed at me expectantly. And my brain, which operates at 50% at best, and I've already said I got the yawnies, made me be like, "I— is this a reference to *Guys and Dolls*?!"

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: [singing] The devil will drag you under—[speaking] no? It's [singing] Don't rock the boat over. [speaking] Okay. So, don't rock the boat. [laughs quietly]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Is, like, a— it—

Teresa: [singing] Sit down, sit down, sit down, sit down, sit down, you're rocking the boat.

Travis: [singing simultaneously] You're rocking the boat. [singing loudly] And there I stood!

[speaking] Okay.

Teresa: Okay, no, no. Not that much.

Travis: Oh, alright, so *you* can do it? Okay, so—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —this is my, uh, specifically I think of this in terms of, like, usually, like, business. But it's like, "Don't make a scene, don't upset the way things are done."

So if it would be like, "Wait, they expect us to come in on our time off? Somebody should say something."

And someone who had been there longer would be like, "Hey, man. Don't rock the boat. It's fine. Like, it'll balance out."
And it usually means, like, "Don't make a fuss over this thing."

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: "Don't upset the way things go."

Teresa: Um, and one could assume that if you had been in a boat, this kind of just comes with the territory, right?

Travis: You don't rock the boat. [crosstalk]

Teresa: You don't rock the boat 'cause it's a—

Travis: 'Cause you could tip the boat over.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Um, so there's actually more to the story than that.

Travis: Get out.

Teresa: And one would think that the idiom "Rock the boat" was so old, right? But it doesn't really appear... until an American lawyer and statesman—

Travis: I'm waiting. Tenterhooks.

Teresa: —and politician named William Jennings Bryan.

Travis: Wait. Whoa! That's, like, early 1900's, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Travis: [incredulously] Are you kidding me?! We had boats long before that! Before that, people would rock the boat and it'd fall and like, "Oh, if only we had some way to warn people not to do that thing they just did! Ugh."

Teresa: Exactly. So you— you, audience, may recognize that name as the lawyer who fought against evolution being taught in school during—

Travis: In the Scopes Monkey Trials! Is that what it's called?

Teresa: That's right, yeah! Exactly, exactly.

Travis: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Teresa: Um, so bef—

Travis: [breathlessly] Wait, hold on! I know something else!

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: They made a book or a movie, or both, called *Inherit the Wind*? Is that—

Teresa: Indeed, yes.

Travis: It se— can I just say, never read it or seen it. It's a really incongruous title to me.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "Yeah, no, it's about evolution and monkeys and stuff."

"Oh, is it called, like, *Monkey Dad* or something?"

"No, it's called *Inherit the Wind*."

"But that doesn't contain the word "monkey" or "trial" or anything!"

"I know."

Teresa: "I know!"

Travis: "That's how we surprise—"

Like, when you see the title *Jaws*, right? [through laughter] You know exactly what's in that movie. [quietly] I'm just saying.

Let's rename it... *Monkey Lawyer*.

Teresa: Uhh, we'll get right on that.

Travis: Thank you.

Teresa: Uh, he was actually a very well-respected lawyer even before that trial. Um, and he is credited with being one of the first people to use this phrase. So the exact quote is, "The man who rocks the boat ought to be stoned when he gets back to shore."

Travis: Well, that seems drastic to me.

Teresa: Implying that any man who made trouble should have to pay for it later.

Travis: Make trouble, okay. That's a better— that's a more succinct way of putting it. Okay, so it's not that prior to that time no one had ever said in the context of being in a boat, "Hey, Jerry. Don't rock the boat."

Teresa: [laughs loudly] Well, no, I guess not!

Travis: He was the first one. He was the first one to use it as an idiom.

Teresa: As an idiom.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Not in the literal sense.

Travis: That makes a lot more sense to me than, like, the phrase "rock the boat" was not spoken.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Okay, okay.

Teresa: Nobody had put that sentence together before.

Travis: "Hey, don't shake the dingy! Oh, no. That— no!"

Teresa: [laughs] Okay. You want another one?

Travis: Yes, please.

Teresa: This suggested by Cameron L.

Travis: Thank you, Cameron L.

Teresa: "Dressed to the nines."

Travis: Okay. Okay!

Teresa: Okay?

Travis: Okay. I know what this means, like you're fully, like, done up. You've got your— all the accessories, you've got all— everything. You are dressed, uh, to impress. Right?

Teresa: Indeed, indeed.

Travis: Sometimes it's really hard when doing these to be like, "What is a definition, an example I could give of this that does not, in itself, contain—"

Teresa: [laughs] Include it.

Travis: "—like, idioms, and, like— like—" [sighs] Or, like, vague terms. Like "dressed to impress." Like, I kind of know what that means, but—

Teresa: Dressed well and fancily.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: And this is supposedly because you need at least nine yards of fabric to make a really great suit.

Travis: Get out of the town! See, I would've guessed it was something to do with, like, time. Like, you go out at nine, or, like, fancy parties start at nine or something. Or there was a club called The Nines. Right?

Teresa: Right. Well—

Travis: But that's not it.

Teresa: Okay. You don't really need nine yards of fabric. According to Mental Floss, who interviewed tailors about this, uh, saw that— found that they really only need four to five yards of fabric to make a even, like, really dandy three piece suit.

Travis: But what about the cape?

[beat]

Teresa: O— okay? I didn't— didn't think about the cape.

Travis: It's been a long time since I got dressed up to go out somewhere. Probably almost two years. Do people wear capes? [strained] I don't remember any more.

Teresa: No— not really.

Travis: I'm bringing 'em back!

Teresa: There may be a few other origins. Um, so, the 99th Lancashire Regiment of Foot was a British army regiment established in 1824, and it was well known for always having their uniforms in immaculate condition.

Travis: And they were the 99, so the nines.

Teresa: Dressed to the nines came to mean dressed like the 99th regiment.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: There is—

Travis: It could also just be wearing your favorite *Brooklyn 99* t-shirt.

Teresa: Maybe.

Travis: Ehh?

Teresa: There is also an old English saying, "dressed to the eyes," which means kind of like from your head, your eyes, to your toes, right? Fully...

Travis: Yeah, okay.

Teresa: ... fully suited up?

Travis: I mean, I guess that— but if someone said, like, "Ah, yeah, he was fully dressed up, from his toes to his eyes." I'd be like, "What about the top of his head? Why did he stop there?"

Unless you're talking about— who's that character from *Bazooka Joe* who wears the really tall turtleneck and you can, like, only see his eyes?

Teresa: I do not know.

Travis: You know that guy? You know who I'm talking about though, right?

Teresa: I vaguely recall a comic book...

Travis: You weren't a big fan of *Bazooka Joe* comics? You weren't... you weren't reading the *Bazooka Joe*?

Teresa: Is it the bubblegum? It's in the bubblegum wrappers.

Travis: It is inside the bubble gum, yeah!

Teresa: Uh, I know of it. I am not really into bubblegum, haven't been for a long time. I have difficulties with my TMJ—

Travis: [simultaneously] I— it's just I thought you were cool.

Teresa: —problems.

Travis: Okay. Alright.

Teresa: Okay, anyway. Um—

Travis: Oh, we got a little off topic there.

Teresa: We did.

Travis: What were we talking about? [laughs quietly]

Teresa: Dressed to the nines. And so, as old English tends to do, it was probably mistaken for "dressed to the nine," meaning "the nine."

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Uh, and so... here we are.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Uh, you know, we're all just really wingin' it when it comes to language, aren't we? [wheeze-laughs]

Travis: Sometimes I feel like some of these, when we get into those ones where it's like there's multiple thing— that the possibility that there's a fourth option where it's just like, somebody said something and someone else misheard them, and then later said, like, "Oh, he's dressed to the nines."

"What'd you say?"

"Oh, it's just something I've heard."

Right? And then it became a thing, and there was *no* reason behind it? There is always that possibility.

Teresa: Language is a great game of telephone.

Travis: I mean, I gue— yeah.

Teresa: Uh, here's another one, one from Jessica H. "In for a penny, in for a pound."

Travis: Okay. Now, I have to assume— okay, first, the meaning is, if you're going to commit a little bit, might as well just go ahead and go all the way.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: So I assume, if I may, that this is like, "Listen. If you're going—" maybe it has something to do with betting? Where it's like if you— if you're confident enough to bet a penny, a little bit of money, just go ahead and bet a pound, man. You know? Like, commit yourself.

Teresa: I mean, the money is the thing, right? That is what this is about. But in a strange way, uh, across the pond it got—

Travis: [exaggerated bad British accent] Across the po— in Britain?!

Teresa: It got flipped around, right? It started in Britain, and it was—

Travis: I apologize to anyone in Bri— I don't know— I'm... [sighs heavily] I'm sorry.

Teresa: It was synonymous with indulgence, right? Going all in on something. But originally was meant to be a scolding type of thing. Where, like, if you were— like, if you owed someone a penny, a small unit of money, you might as well owe them a pound, because you're really dumb, right? Because even that little bit of, you know, debt... is— is important.

Travis: Oh. So, like, if you're in for a penny then, like, you're never gonna pay— you may as well be in for a pound. Right?

Teresa: Right, yeah.

Travis: 'Cause, like, you're never gonna pay them back. It's interesting, 'cause there's a phrase— and I think it's a slogan, maybe, advertising, maybe, but the only people I've ever heard use it are, like, Griffin and I. And it's, uh, "If you're gonna go to town..." I think it's "might as well go in a Lincoln," or "might as well go in—" it's, like, some kind of fancy town car, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And it's like, if you're gonna go to town, go in a Lincoln. Right?

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Like, if you're gonna make the commitment to— if you're gonna go to town, go fancy. Right? And that's what I think of. I guess it could be in for a penny, in for a pound, like, "If we're gonna do this, let's do this."

But I also think it— I— I think it's just... maybe it's just 'cause I love gambling. But there's something about it to me that seems synonymous with gambling to me.

Teresa: Well, a little bit, right? So, uh, once the colonists started also using this, it got flipped around. So, uh, in— to kind of, like— like, badger somebody and, like, egg them on. Um, which is... "Might as well buy another round," right? You've already— you're in for a penny, in for a pound, right? You've already started, why quit now?

Travis: It also— there's something about it that feels like a line that someone in a TV show uses when it's like, "Well, I already broke the law a little bit." Right? I think that that's probably the most used version of it now.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Where it's like, "Well, I already broke into the office. I might as well steal the computer." Right?

Teresa: [laughs] And, uh, this next one is suggested by Alex, who just wrote, "Egg them on." And now wanted to do "egg them on."

Travis: And I was like, "Wait, egg them on—" oh my God, okay!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: This is another weird thing about doing idiom episodes is, like, there will be an idiom that if, like, I don't even think of as an idiom anymore, right? It just is so pervasive and used that it's just like, "You know, like, egg 'em on. You know!"

Teresa: "You know!"

Travis: "It means, like, to... egg... someone on!" And you know what? I would love to talk about egging someone on. But first, a thank you note for our sponsors!

[theme music plays]

Travis: This week, we want to write a thank you note to BetterHelp. BetterHelp is online therapy, and one, we appreciate you being our sponsor. But two, we appreciate you making therapy available to even more people. Teresa and I are both big fans, uh, think therapy is great.

Teresa: Both currently enrolled with therapy.

Travis: Yes. We are practicing therapy, if you will.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, and it doesn't matter who you are or what you have. Life can be stressful. You know, sometimes it's not— I think that this was a thing I thought about for therapy for a long time where I was like, "Well, and there's nothing big. I'm just kind of stressed out about this, and this, and this."

That is more than enough reason to talk to somebody, right? Because it helps.

Teresa: And there's nothing— and there's nothing like talking to someone who doesn't actually have anything to do with what you're talking about, right? So if you talk to a spouse, you talk to a friend, they may also be involved or have some sort of, like, story they want to tell you.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: But a therapist is just there to listen to you.

Travis: And I tell you what, man. One of the things that I really appreciate about therapy now, especially as a parent, is just having someone who is not involved with the situation, as you said, like, "Well, you're doing your best."

And, like, sometimes that's enough for me to just start crying and like, "[tearfully] Thank you!"

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "I am doing my be—" it's just nice to unload that burden you're carrying, that sometimes you worry about burdening other people with. All that stuff. So check out BetterHelp. BetterHelp is customized online therapy that offers video, phone, and even live chat sessions with your therapist, and it's more affordable than in-person therapy. See if it's for you! This podcast is sponsored by BetterHelp, and *Shmanners* listeners get 10% off their first month at betterhelp.com/shmanners. Have your first session in under 48 hours at betterhelp.com/shmanners.

[music plays]

Jesse: I'm Jesse Thorn. This week on *Bullseye*, David Byrne on The Talking Heads easing back into live performance, and the magic of doo-wop.

David: You don't get it very much, people doing dippity dip dip, wa wa, mama nama nama nama. You don't get a lot of that. [laughs]

Jesse: Listen to *Bullseye* from Maximumfun.org and NPR.

[music plays and ends]

Travis: Alright, Teresa. Let me egg you on... to tell me about egging them on. So, this is like, to kind of, uh, push someone to do something, right?

Teresa: Right, to encourage behavior that is usually questionable or dangerous.

Travis: Yeah, I wouldn't normally use "egging on" in, like, a positive sense? Like, "I egged them on to do a good job on their test."

Teresa: Right. No, you would, like, cheer for them, or you would encourage them, or something like that. It has a negative connotation.

Travis: Right. Like, "Oh, did you hear about John? He got caught shoplifting."

Like, "Yeah, but Debbie was egging him on." Right?

Teresa: Yeah, sure. Um, and this is one—

Travis: Why was that my exa— I don't know. Go on.

Teresa: I don't know. This one has been in the English language approximately since 1200. [laughs quietly]

Travis: What?! Is it literally about, like, throwing eggs at someone?

Teresa: It is derived from the old Norse word "eggja."

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Which means "to incite or provoke."

Travis: Eggja?

Teresa: Eggja.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, and so it's not really about, like, throwing eggs.

Travis: It's not about— it's not about eggs at all.

Teresa: It's not really about eggs.

Travis: [emphatically] It's not about eggs... at all. Bombshell! B-b-b-b-bomb! [deep voice] That's another *Shmanners* B-b-b-bombshell.

Teresa: Mm, I don't know if I wanna do that.

Travis: I just thought we could use a couple more kind of, like— like, drops?

Teresa: Nah.

Travis: You don't want any more drops?

Teresa: Mm-mm. But I like—

Travis: [loud and high-pitched] That's a bombshell! [normal volume and pitch] What about that one?

Teresa: No.

Travis: Is that better?

Teresa: No.

Travis: Okay. What about this one? [loud and high-pitched] Meow! I'm the bombshell kitty!

Teresa: That makes even less sense.

Travis: Well, 'cause that's the kitty— he rides in on the bombshell.

Teresa: It should be a turtle! 'Cause of the shell.

Travis: [slow, deep voice] I'm the bombshell turtle.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Yeah, but that's a long one. That's not as exciting. [holding back laughter] That kind of drags the energy down.

[beat]

Teresa: Speaking of drag the energy down, watch me. So, um, that is an example of someone hearing a word that sounds like another word that they know using the meaning of the original word.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: When I think about this, I think about avocado.

Travis: Go on?

Teresa: Well, I mean... it's based on a language, a, um— I'm not— I can't remember if it's Aztec or Mayan, where the actual thing is pronounced *ahuacatl*.

Travis: Ahh.

Teresa: And so people who heard it were like, "Oh. Avocado. Great."

Travis: Okay. Yep!

Teresa: It's not exactly like that. It's similar to that, but not really. Okay.

Travis: Uh, just to check, it was Proto-Aztecan, uh, was the origin of avocado. Okay!

Teresa: Yes. Thank you, thank you, "Travis Googles It."

Travis: You're welcome. Sometimes the word, uh, was used with the meaning "testicle." Okay, go on.

Teresa: That makes sense. Here's one from Miranda M. "Last ditch effort."

Travis: Okay, once again, I don't even *think* of thi— okay. So, last ditch effort is like, "We have one more thing we can try." Right? This is all—

you know what? It doesn't look like we're gonna succeed. Um, so let's do one final push, give it everything we've got. Um...

Teresa: A desperate attempt.

Travis: Yeah, there's another saying here of, like, a Hail Mary.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Which has to do with, like, football, which I'm sure then comes from Catholicism.

Teresa: I thought it was basketball.

Travis: No...

Teresa: They have Hail Marys in— 'cause you would just throw— from wherever you were on the court you would just throw the ball?

Travis: Maybe they use it in basketball too, but I think it's primarily associated with football. 'Cause it's basically like, "I'm gonna throw—"

Teresa: *Le football americain.*

Travis: Alright. Where— what country do you live in, again? Remind me? What country is this that we're currently sitting in right now?

Teresa: The US.

Travis: Okay. So I don't think I have to— um, okay.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: So, a Hail Mary is like you throw it really far down the field and you just hope somebody catches it.

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, mm-hmm. And this has to do with William of Orange.

[pause]

Travis: William... of Or-*ange*.

Teresa: Uh, in the 17th century—

Travis: You know that the color gets its name from the fruit and not the other way around?

Teresa: Yeah, I believe that.

Travis: It's true!

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I think! I think it's true!

Teresa: It makes sense.

Travis: It feels like a fact I know. Go on!

Teresa: [laughs] We're not gonna get another "Travis Googles It"?

Travis: No!

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: I'm gonna— because here's the thing. The stakes on this...

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: ... are very low.

Teresa: Okay. 17th century.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: William of Orange.

Travis: Got it.

Teresa: Made a vow to defend the Dutch Republic from France and Britain to the death.

Travis: You hear that? You hear that, haters?

Teresa: He is reported—

Travis: You got Bill Orange [holding back laughter] to deal with!

Teresa: —to have said, "I mean to die in the last ditch."

Travis: Oh! Oh!

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Okay!

Teresa: Uh, and it didn't really catch on until about 1900, uh, when people started using it to mean the final attempt.

Travis: I love—

Teresa: But that's— that's pretty metal. Right?

Travis: I love that we have some things where it's just like, "Well—" like "dressed to the nines." It could be this, uh, or it could be [unintelligible].

And then you get to "last ditch effort" and it's like, "Oh, this dude said [wheezes] he would fight until he died in a ditch."

"Oh, yeah. One for one, got it, yeah."

Teresa: "Got it."

Travis: That's exactly what it is, okay.

Teresa: Alright. Uh, submitted by Bob W.

Travis: Thank you, Bob W.

Teresa: "Well to do."

Travis: Oh my God, that's— that's an idiom?!

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Oh my lanta. Okay, well to do is, like, somebody who's doing good for themselves in the world, as far as, like, uh, money that they have, or the circumstances they find themselves in where you're like, "Oh, they don't need to worry about money. They don't need to worry about sustaining themselves, because they are, uh— they have it all taken care of."

Teresa: Yeah. Yeah. Um, it didn't come into the popular vernacular until the 1800's, but it probably goes back to the 1500's. Um, back then, to say someone was "well" meant they were in a good position. Socially, financially, all that stuff.

And during that time period, you would say that someone was well as a way to describe that they had everything they needed. So, exactly. They didn't have to worry about that kind of stuff. So you could say well in cash, or well in goods.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Which... snowballed into well to do.

Travis: Do you think that that is like the "Oh, all well and good," was, like—

Teresa: Oh, sure.

Travis: —a kind of thing like that? Okay. Alright. You know they also—you can call a party a "to do."

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: "It was a fancy to do, it was a great to do." [scoffs] Our language is confusing.

Teresa: Indeed.

Travis: "What did you say? You went to a to do?"

"Yeah!"

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "What?!"

Teresa: Here's one from Sarah W.

Travis: Thank you, Sarah W.

Teresa: "Rolling out the red carpet."

Travis: Okay, this one I got.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Thi— this one I can take. So, rolling out the red carpet is like you make someone feel special. Right? Usually pertaining to a guest. Right? A guest is coming, we're gonna roll out the red carpet.

And I'm *almost* certain that this is probably directly from, like, Hollywood, like, premiers. Like, "We're rolling out the red car—" like, maybe even before that. Of, like, we're having a big, fancy party, and we're gonna roll out a red carpet, literally roll out a red carpet for people to walk down.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Right? Is that it?

Teresa: Yeah, but it's before that, actually.

Travis: What?!

Teresa: Um, so... here's the thing, right?

Travis: Tell me the thing.

Teresa: The famous people are kind of like the royalty of our society.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: But a long, long time ago, when there actually—

Travis: I don't know, but what's— aristocracy? What's the— what's—

Teresa: Oh, sure, yeah.

Travis: Like, the court. You know when you had the court—

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: —where it's like, well, they're not royals but they're all, like, dukes and duchesses and stuff.

Teresa: Going all the way back to the ancient Greece, it was expected that one would lay carpet or mats so that the royalty needn't touch the ground of peasantry.

Travis: [flatly] Okay.

Teresa: Um, and red. Why red, right? Uh, it was always associated with royalty and prestige, because it's a very difficult color to make.

Travis: Yeah, same with purple.

Teresa: Same with purple.

Travis: In Egypt, that's how purple became associated with royalty, because in ancient Egypt it was very hard to get that rich purple color.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Um, and so the—

Teresa: And it's, like, a— a multi-step chemical reaction to get that purple color.

Travis: Right, and so that's how that became associated with— with royalty, because only royalty could really, uh, get it.

Teresa: Mm-hmm. Uh, scarlet in particular was so prized because it was nearly impossible to create easily, right? You had to get—

Travis: Your enemies' blood?!

Teresa: No.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: It was made with a very expensive dye from a very specific insect in Central and South America, and it was prized by the Mayans and the Aztecs for the way it could be used to color clothing, and lots of other things. Um—

Travis: Listen, I'm not down with taking that stuff from the indigenous peoples, let's be clear. But can you imagine having a life where someone would show you, like, a new shirt they got, and it was red, and you're like, "How did you do that?!" [laughs]

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: "What?! Look how red that is! That's incredible!" [laughs] And that just being, like, a thing. Like, "Hey! Hey, everybody, get in here! Get in here! You gotta see Steve's shirt! It's so red!"

I'm just yelling in your ear. I'm so sorry. But, like, now it takes— think of how much it takes to impress someone.

[low voice] I'll take it down here. Think how hard it is—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —to impress someone. Now imagine if you could blow someone's mind with how red your shirt was.

Teresa: I know, right? Um, you know, so, like you said, the colonizers took it, like they do everything. Um, it became a very valuable export. So, the next time, you know, Meryl Streep walks down that red carpet...

Travis: Oh, you think—

Teresa: ... think about the bugs. [laughs]

Travis: I just was going to go into, like, a quote from *Devil Wears Prada*, and then I remembered, uh, I've never seen it, and I'm also not certain it was Meryl Streep that was in it?

Teresa: Yeah, it's Meryl Streep.

Travis: It was Meryl Streep. There's something about "You think that you chose that shirt," or so— I don't know. "You think you chose those bugs?" was what I was gonna do, but I can't remember the quote. It's not important.

Teresa: Ohhh, yeah. Yeah.

Travis: No, it's dumb. It's dumb. It's a silly thing.

Teresa: Um, Alex has been keeping a personal tabulation of idioms, and here is another one. Thank you, Alex. "Bread and butter. Something is your bread and butter."

Travis: This episode is blowing my mind at things that I would never think of idioms. That is definitely an idiom.

Teresa: Definitely!

Travis: Okay, so bread and butter is like, "Oh, this is the thing that I'm good at." Right? "Oh, this— this right here?" Like, if you were doing trivia, right? And for me it would be like if they said, like, "These are all Mel Brooks questions."

I'd be like, "Ah, this is my bread and butter right here."

Teresa: So, the basics or the distillation or the, um— the thing that is most important, right?

Travis: Right, yeah, yeah, yeah. I would say, like, the epitome of— of that thing for you.

Teresa: Um, and so we're pretty sure this comes from within the Middle Ages when bread and butter was considered a meal.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Right. For the peasantry, right?

Travis: I mean, to be fair, sometimes you have toast and butter for breakfast.

Teresa: Uh, yes...

Travis: But I would not say, like, "Ah. That's all one needs."

Teresa: [laughs] Exactly, exactly. But it was considered the most basic way that you could feed yourself. It does contain two food groups.

Travis: And it's very filling, bread.

Teresa: Yeah, you can eat enough of it. And bread back then was a lot more hearty.

Travis: And dense.

Teresa: Than— than a slice of toasted sourdough.

Travis: That's a [deep voice] thick sli— a *Shmanners* thick slice. [normal pitch] How about that one? Was that a good drop?

Teresa: Uh, it was alright. Um, so if you didn't have bread and butter, you were lacking the absolute essentials, right?

Travis: Oh, yeah. That makes sense, yeah. "Oh, you don't have the basics to care for your—" oh yeah!

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Okay. I feel like that makes sense, but I feel like... when I hear people use it it is maybe slightly off the mark, as far as, like— off the mark.

Teresa: There it is.

Travis: You know, that's like aiming at a target. Um, that it's like you're using it but not in the way it is intended. To say, like, "Ah, this is my bread and butter." When what you mean is, like, "Ah, this is what I need, not what I'm good at."

I guess that you could use it interchangeably. Okay.

Teresa: Um, this one was submitted by Alex's mom.

Travis: [gasps] What? What?! Okay.

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Alright.

Teresa: Happier than a pig in... mud.

Travis: Okay. Well, this is, uh, you know, you're, uh... [sniffs] you seem very pleased.

Teresa: They didn't hear the wink.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Wink!

Travis: Uh, in— in— in the S word. In swerds. Um, it's— you know, you seem very pleased with yourself, you seem very pleased by the situation.

Teresa: Exactly, and it is quite literal. Here's some [singing] farm wisdom, farm wisdom.

Travis: Look at you! I didn't know you'd ever listened to my show before.

Teresa: I have!

Travis: Hmm.

Teresa: I certainly have.

Travis: Not in a long time. We haven't done farm wisdom in, like, three years. [laughs]

Teresa: That's true. It's a MBMBaM reference. Uh, so it is very literal. Pigs actually love being covered in mud be—

Travis: 'Cause it cools them down!

Teresa: Exactly. The evaporative properties. Also it creates a kind of shell against insects and whatever, but they don't really have a lot of sweat glands. They can't effectively cool themselves off, so you could— I mean, you could use a sprinkler, I guess.

Travis: Or a little piggy shower.

Teresa: Or a little piggy shower.

Travis: Give 'em a piggy bath. It's like dogs. You know, they— they pant, and they don't have a lot of sweat glands either. Now, pigs, also very smart.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Very smart pigs. Have you ever seen *Babe*?

Teresa: I—

Travis: That pig is very smart.

Teresa: But that—

Travis: He lines 'em all up, and he can talk. And he talks to geese, and the dogs, and "That'll do, pig. That'll do."

Teresa: Have you actually seen that movie, too?

Travis: Y— umm... I know that that'll do.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: And he talks to some sheep, and says "Baa-Ram-Ewe."

Teresa: Mm-hmm. Okay.

Travis: Uh, and then I— I've definitely seen *Babe: Pig in the City 2*. Or maybe it's just called *Babe: Pig in the City*. 'Cause I talked about it on, uh, on *Blank Check*, and was horrified [wheeze-laughs] by it. Anyways, that's not important.

Teresa: Um, here are some listener-submitted idioms in other languages, from other countries.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Uh, here are some Dutch idioms for us to enjoy. Um, I'm gonna try very hard.

Nu komt de aap uit de mouw.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Meaning "The monkey comes out of the sleeve."

Travis: Yes?!

Teresa: The situation or the character of a person comes to the surface.

Travis: [gasps] Yes! Ahh, the monkey comes out of the sleeve, my friend!

Teresa: Indeed.

Travis: Now I know the—[through laughter] that's so good!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Oh my gosh, I love that!

Teresa: Um—

Travis: Why is he in a sleeve?

Teresa: I don't know. Is he wearing clothes?

Travis: Maybe it just means, like, you know, like a sleeve. Not just, like, an arm sleeve, just, like... a sleeve of cookies in a container?

Teresa: [laughs] Cookies in a container.

Travis: The monkey comes out of the sleeve. I hope— listeners, listen. I hope none of you are faced with heartbreak. But if you ever need to break up with someone 'cause they've shown their true colors, please with a straight face say, like, "But that's when the monkey came out of the sleeve, Josh!"

And— because in that moment, Josh will have no defense.

Teresa: [laughs] No defense. Uh, here's another one.

Travis: "I guess you're right. I did show my monkey?"

Teresa: Uh, *met de mond vol tanden staan*. "Stand with your mouth full of teeth," which means to be speechless.

Travis: Okay!

Teresa: Teeth instead of words, maybe?

Travis: Well, it's just I got so many teeth in there I can't talk, you know?

Teresa: Oh, maybe.

Travis: [exaggerated chewing sounds]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: All teeth!

Teresa: Uh, *met de deur in huis vallen*.

Travis: I don't know.

Teresa: *Huis vallen*, maybe? Uh, "To fall with the door into the house," meaning to get straight to the point. So, like, I imagine someone—

Travis: Like, kind of slamming the door open?

Teresa: —like, slamming the door open, the door falling off of its hinges, and landing flat on the door.

Travis: It kind of means, like, kicking the door— I kind of see it as, like, kicking the door open but you just kind of keep going with the door.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "Now I'm inside. Let's do this! Hey, I'm gonna kick the door open and fall in on it, Josh. Your monkey's out of the sleeve now!"

Teresa: [laughs] Uh, oh! *Op de fiets*.

Travis: Oh? Go on?

Teresa: Means "Oh, on *that* bicycle." [laughs quietly] Meaning "Oh, *now* I get what you mean."

Travis: Okay. This one... "Oh, on *that* bicycle." Is it literally saying, like, "Oh, you mean you want me to get on *that* bicycle?"

Teresa: [laughs] No, I think it's like, "I have— I've finally figured it out. It's that bicycle. That one." Like, "I've seen it. That one. Yes, I understand what you mean."

Travis: I love that. That's so specific.

Teresa: Uh, and again, another bicycle-related idiom. "*Ga to... toch fietsen? Ga toch fietsen*." Uh, "Go ride your bike."

Travis: Is that like "Get outta here. I don't need you!"

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: "Go ride a bike, man!"

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: That's universal. If you tell someone "Go take a walk," or take a hike, go ride your bicycle, it's never a nice thing.

Teresa: No.

Travis: It's never like, "[cheerfully] Go ride your bike!"

"Oh, thanks, I will!"

It's like, "Get ou— hey!"

Teresa: "Hey!"

Travis: "Hey, hit the bricks! Go ride a bike! Take a hike!"

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: "B— uhh... go watch *Psych*!"

Teresa: But fanners, we don't want *you* to take any hikes, get on any bikes.

Travis: Well, hold on now. You can't say it like that, 'cause that makes it sound like you're saying, like, "We don't want you to enjoy the out-of-doors!"

Teresa: [laughs] No, stick— stick with us.

Travis: We want you on your couch, listening to *Shmanners* and nothing else.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: You ever seen *Wall-E*? We want you like that. We want you in floating chairs.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: We want you listening to *Shmanners*.

Teresa: With just us in your ear.

Travis: Okay. It's a lot of pressure.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, listen. If you enjoyed this episode, please share it with other people. Uh, word of mouth is always the best way to help grow the show. Uh, if you like this show go check out all the other amazing shows on Maximumfun.org, our podcast home. You can also go to mcelroy.family to check out all of the McElroy family products and projects there. Go check

out mcelroymerch.com to see all the cool stuff we got goin' on over there. There's some really great stuff, you're gonna love it.

Teresa: Cool new stuff for a new month!

Travis: That's right. For new people. I don't know, for a new world? Um, let's see, what else? Thank you to Alex—

Teresa: Of course. Thank you, Alex.

Travis: —without whom we would not be able to do these episodes. Um, and you know what? Thank you to you, Teresa, for being such a great partner in both life and podcasting.

Teresa: Aww!

Travis: I love you very much.

Teresa: I love you, too.

Travis: Okay, what else do we say?

Teresa: We always say thank you to Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. We also thank Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art. That is @shmannerstcast. Um, and you can— when we ask for questions for specific topics, that's where we get them. But when we ask for topics and idioms, please send those to shmannerstcast@gmail.com.

Travis: There it is.

Teresa: There it is. Also, thank you to Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for our cover picture of our fan-run Facebook group, *Shmannerst Fanners*. Go ahead and join that group if you love to give and get excellent advice from other fans.

Travis: Also wanted to let everyone know, we've got a My Brother, My Brother, and Me live and virtual show happening September 24th.

Teresa: Woot woot!

Travis: That is— thank you— September 24th at 9 PM Eastern Time. *Sawbones* is our opener, which is very exciting. We all love *Sawbones*. Uh, tickets are on sale now for just \$10. You can get those at bit.ly/mbmbamvirtual, and even if you can't make 9 PM on September 24th, you can watch the video on demand, which will be available for two weeks after the show.

Teresa: *Sawbones* is a podcast I listen to all the time.

Travis: Yes, I know. Yes, you love that and *Empty Bowl*. Basically any podcast that has McElroys that I'm not on.

Teresa: [laughs]

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

Teresa: No RSVP required.

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

Teresa: Manners, *Shmanners*. Get it.

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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