

Shmanners 364: Greeting Cards

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[theme music plays]

Travis: Hello, internet! I'm your husband host, [mumbling] Travis Bababoy.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I'm not going again.

Teresa: [through laughter] You're not going again.

Travis: One take Travis.

Teresa: Okay. And I'm your wife host, [mumbling] Bebesa Bababoy.

Travis: And you're listening—now it's just me. And you're listening to Shmanners!

Teresa: [laughs] It's extraordinary etiquette...

Travis: For ordinary occasions. Hello, my dove.

Teresa: Hello, dear.

Travis: I don't know if you can tell...

Teresa: Yeah?

Travis: Um, burned out.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: [laughs] I've traveled five times—five weekends out of the last six weekends.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Oof! I've been home the last two weeks, two and a half days each week.

Teresa: It's con season.

Travis: It's con season. We did two tours, basically one at the beginning of June and one, uh, one at the end of May, I guess, and one now. Uh, yeah. But I love—love that jet set lifestyle. I'm up there in my private jet, setting. And, um, it's weird—can I tell you what's weird? On my private—

Teresa: All those other people on your private jet?

Travis: There's so many other people on my private jet!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And I have to go through the airport to get on it, and it's owned by somebody else?

Teresa: These days.

Travis: And sometimes I have to sit, like, in the back? It's weird! I don't understand. They're all using my bathroom. Hi, everybody. Hi. This is Shmanners.

Teresa: Yes. We've established that.

Travis: Did we?

Teresa: I think so.

Travis: Okay. We're talking about greeting cards.

Teresa: We are. Um, so we've been greeting card adjacent a couple times. We've talked about business cards.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: We've talked about calling cards.

Travis: And we talked about thank you notes, like, right there in the beginning.

Teresa: We've talked about thank you notes, and we talked about Christmas cards. But we're gonna talk a little bit more about the generalities of greeting cards.

Travis: This time we're focusing just on that kind of grumpy old lady who, like, always has the coffee and, like, her sunglasses on, and she's like, "I don't know, man. Sorry your dog died or whatever. I don't know. You know?" She probably doesn't—the probably don't make shoebox cards for that, do they?

Teresa: No, I don't think so.

Travis: "Sorry you lost your job or whatever. Don't talk to me before I have my coffee!"

Teresa: Something like that.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So let's give a little history behind it. Um, you might think...

Travis: Wait. Me or the listener?

Teresa: The listener. The listener.

Travis: What would I think?

Teresa: When you think of greeting cards.

Travis: Oh, sure.

Teresa: One might think of the aisles and aisles at the Hallmark store, if they have those anymore, or CVS more likely, of the different, like, uh, filed greeting cards, right? It wasn't always like that. Obviously.

Travis: Well, yeah, babe. Hey, babe?

Teresa: Yeah?

Travis: I know it wasn't always like that.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Like, when the Earth cooled, right? From its magma form, greeting cards didn't naturally form from the loam.

Teresa: That's true!

Travis: Okay. Somebody had to make 'em.

Teresa: They did. And odds are that the tradition of exchanging these cards originated in China.

Travis: Makes sense.

Teresa: Where one would exchange messages of goodwill and good luck to your friends and family to celebrate the New Year.

Travis: Yeah?

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. But they weren't the only ones, because we also have evidence that the early Egyptians sent greetings to each other on handmade papyrus scrolls.

Travis: Bet that was cool, man.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Can you imagine? If somebody just walked up to you today and handed you, like, handmade papyrus with, like, uh, you know, hieroglyphics on it? And they were just like, "Happy birthday!" [laughs] I'd love that!

Teresa: [laughs] So what I'm getting at is probably once writing was invented, people used it to send each other small messages. Right?

Travis: Yeah. I'm trying to think, like, do I think that there was a time where—there had to be a tipping point, right? Where at first, like, saying, for example, "Happy birthday," right? Was normal, and getting a card was like, "Whoa, a card? Wow!"

And then there had to be a tipping point where it was like, you would say "Happy birthday," and the person would think, "You didn't get me a card?" Right? There had to be...

Teresa: [laughs] I wonder.

Travis: There had to be an adoption tipping point where it was like, now doing a card is the, like, thing you do. And even if, like, you see them—because that—it had to also be a time where it was like, I could just tell you happy birthday, right? But now showing up to a birthday party and not at least having a card, even if you're there, feels weird.

Teresa: Well, by the 15th century, handmade paper greeting cards were being exchanged all over Europe. In fact, the Germans specifically were known to have printed New Year's cards as early as the year 1400, making them out of woodcuts. Not like the printing press, right? But, like, wooden stamps almost.

Travis: [crosstalk] Like you can do with a potato.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I learned about that from Pee-wee's Playhouse Christmas.

Teresa: [laughs] Uh, around this time was when they started to exchange Valentine's Day cards. Um, in fact the oldest ever Valentine's Day card in

existence is in the British Museum. It is a card written to Bonne of Armagnac by her husband—or I guess Bonnie of Armagnac by her husband, Charles, the Duke of Orleans.

Travis: Yeah. And he drew a picture of Sonic and he was like, "My heart goes fast when I'm with you."

Teresa: Uh... not quite. In fact, our boy, Chuck—

Travis: Yeah, Chuckles.

Teresa: —uh, he was actually imprisoned in the Tower of London at the time.

Travis: So he could buy Sonic Valentines?!

Teresa: No. No.

Travis: The cruelest cut!

Teresa: No. Uh, it was—I mean, probably not the happiest of messages. [laughs quietly] Right? In fact, the opening—

Travis: "Roses are red. Violets are blue. I'm stuck in prison. How about you?"

Teresa: "I am already sick of love, my gentle Valentine."

Travis: "And if you could get me a cake a file in it, that would be amazing."

Teresa: [laughs] Something like that. If you want to hear more about Valentine's Day card, check out our Valentine's Day special from 2021. It's episode 248, and it came out on February 12th, 2021.

Travis: Do you think that there was also a time where, like, a poet, like, wrote a love poem and handed it to somebody and they were like, "I love this. I would like it better if it was folded in half, though, and then I could, like, open it and read it."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And they were like, "What?"

And they're like, "Yeah, man. So, like, write on one side, and then on the front, maybe like a funny cat or something? And then I can open it and read it, and if you had done that I would've married you."

And they're like, "Aww, man. Well, next time."

Teresa: Yeah. So up until the 1800s, it is safe to assume that most of these notes were handmade. Whether they were stamped or drawn or, you know, scrawled out with... I don't know. Did they have crayons? [laughs quietly]

Travis: Sure. Yeah!

Teresa: Something like that.

Travis: Hey, they had to. Somebody looked at, like, a red candle and they were like, "Hand me that." [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs] A candle?

Travis: "I got an idea. Watch this. You're gonna love this. This is the new thing. My name is Jonathan Crayola and I've just figured it all out."

Teresa: But then around that time, the printing press and the postal technology—

Travis: Xerox.

Teresa: Uh, I mean, 1800s? Probably not Xerox. But they were making greeting cards much more accessible to the masses, right? So as before you had to have leisure time, you had to have the equipment in order to make it. Uh, you he'd to be able to get someone to send it for you or deliver it or whatever. But now that greeting cards had been, like, mass produced, right? And the postage stamp was in wide circulation at that point, um, we had by

the 1800s we had trains delivering cards and mail instead of horses, which means things could be larger and heavier, and you could send more, and it would be more cost effective. So, that meant that anybody at this time could buy a cute card and ship it to somebody they wanted to send it to without shelling out a bunch of money or having to deal with the hassle.

Travis: Can you imagine being, like, one of the first people to, like, get a greeting card by mail, and having no idea if you were supposed to, like, respond, or just get it. Right?

Teresa: Hmm.

Travis: If you were just like, "Oh, cool! [pause] [stammering] Do—do I write—do I write a thank you card for this car—" like, 'cause you can't call. There's no phone. You can't be like, "I got your card." Right? So do I write back? Do I send another card?

Teresa: I mean, I don't think that you have to—you definitely don't have to send a thank you card for a thank you card.

Travis: Well, you know that now.

Teresa: But you—

Travis: But I'm saying this is, like, 1826 or whatever and a guy on a horse just delivered a card that says, like, "Congratulations on your new baby!" And I'm like, "Okay?! Is this from you, horse man?"

And he's like, "No!"

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "It's from your friend Bob!"

And I'm like, "Ah. That's really sweet of Bob."

"Yeah, he sent it two years ago."

Teresa: [laughs] No, but by the 1800s I'm saying it went by train, so it was only one year ago.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: Um, this is when the convenience of it all paved the way for Christmas cards.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: And Christmas cards specifically have a very rich history, because historians trace this back to the custom of a man by the name of Sir Henry Cole, who came up with the idea of Yuletide cards in 1843.

Travis: And his last name was Cole? For Christmas?

Teresa: Hm...?

Travis: Ah?

Teresa: That was the year that he hired his buddy—

Travis: Wheels within wheels. It's all tied back into Santa Claus

Teresa: It's all tied together. Uh, John Calcutt Horsley to design a holiday card that he could send to his friends and acquaintances. Now, Horsley designed a card—

Travis: [simultaneously] Was a horse.

Teresa: No.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: He was not. With three panels. So the outer two showed people caring for the poor, right? And then it opened, you know, like a curtain parting, right? So, like, opened out this way. Um, you can't—

Travis: So it split down the middle.

Teresa: You guys can't see. [laughs]

Travis: But it becomes a trifold.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Or a tri—yeah, you get it.

Teresa: Yes. Is a fold on each side. Not like a book.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Anyway. [laughs]

Travis: Unless you have a weird book that opens down the center of...

Teresa: [laughs] I guess so. One of those popup books. Um, and it opened to show a family having Christmas dinner. Uh, some people complained a little bit because it did show a child downing a glass of wine, which—

Travis: Ah, grow up!

Teresa: Uh, which was not, you know, a super important detail. But—

Travis: It could be what we in our house call kid wine, which is juice. [laughs] Sparkling juice.

Teresa: Sparkling apple juice. [laughs] Uh, and they were originally only going to give it to their friends and acquaintances, but they printed hundreds of them.

Travis: How many people do you know, Cole?!

Teresa: I know, right? So they decided to sell them to people for a shilling each.

Travis: Hmm.

Teresa: Which would've been about five bucks today.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, and so then the Horsley Christmas card is a treasured antique that has actually come through Christie's auction house in 2020. It sold for 13,750 British pounds.

Travis: Oh, wow.

Teresa: Which is 17,600 US dollars.

Travis: Or 27,000... Bleeblorbs, which is what aliens use.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: I'm so tired.

Teresa: You really are.

Travis: Teresa Murray, I'm so tired. Okay, keep going.

Teresa: Okay, okay, okay. Uh, so people loved this tradition, and it quickly caught on in the UK, because not only was it festive, it was also cheap, right? Why—you know, you wouldn't have to go through all of the trouble of, you know, creating a bespoke garment or, like, um, making 30 jars of jam or whatever it was, right? You could just go and buy these cheaply printed cards.

Cards could be posted in an unsealed envelope for one half penny, which was half the price of an ordinary letter.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: So people got creative with their Christmas cards. And so by 1860, greeting cards had been added on top of this, right? Because it's not enough to just sell cards one season of the year.

Travis: Sure!

Teresa: We gotta sell 'em year round!

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: Uh, companies like Marcus Ward and Company, Charles Goodall and Son, and Charles Bennett became mass producers of greeting cards and employed well known artists of the day to illustrate and design. For example, Kate Greenaway and Walter Crane were incredibly accomplished artists who had a big hand at illustrating the first compendiums of nursery rhymes. So they were two big names employed by the greeting card companies. Um, and then once we entered the 20th century, it was clear that this trend was here to stay.

Travis: Well, I want to talk more about that. But first... how about a word from some other Max Fun shows?

[theme music plays]

[music plays]

Dave: Oh my gosh, hi! It's me, Dave Holmes, host of the pop culture game show Troubled Waters. On Troubled Waters we play a whole host of games, like one where I describe a show using limerick and our guests have to figure out what it is. Let's do one right now. What show am I talking about?

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Speaker 2: Uh, Big Business, starring Bette Midler and Lily Tomlin.

Dave: Close! But no.

[incorrect buzzer]

Speaker 3: Oh! Is it Troubled Waters, the pop culture quiz show with all your favorite comedians?

Dave: Yes!

[chimes]

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[music and ad end]

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J. Keith: Yeah, no excuses. So if you're not listening...

Helen: You can go fact yourself!

[music and ad end]

Travis: Okay. When last we spoke... the greeting cards were here to stay.

Teresa: And we had just entered the 20th century. And here comes glorious technicolor!

Travis: Okay?

Teresa: You ever seen that?

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: That—okay.

Travis: I just didn't know how to respond to it.

Teresa: [laughs] Okay.

Travis: Yeah! I acknowledged the thing you did. That was what I had.

Teresa: [laughs] That's from a song. Anyway, um, this color lithography in the 1930s sent the industry, like, just barreling forward, right? So the greeting cards were known as studio cards, but they became incredibly popular in the '40s and '50s. They were extra tall, okay? So they weren't like regular card-sized paper, right? They were extra tall, and they usually had, like, tongue-in-cheek greeting jokes.

Travis: Sure, hmm, yeah.

Teresa: Right? Um, and so—

Travis: Old lady with her coffee mug.

Teresa: Not—sorta—not—I mean, sort of. There's one famous one of a portly lady smoking a cigar, and it says "The secret to eternal youth?"

And then you open it. It says "Lie about your age."

Travis: Oh, I get it. Okay.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Travis: A lot of wine mom jokes, is what you're saying.

Teresa: Sure! [laughs] Into the '70s, smaller card companies began to emerge, so you had a lot more choice. Again, more humorous and whimsical cards to compete with other companies like Hallmark. Um, and by the '80s the reduced cost of small batch printing made it economically possible for smaller companies to compete in the greeting card world. And today, we have places like Etsy, right? Where you can basically see someone's art that you like, and they can print you off a whole batch of cards if you want.

Travis: And there are still, like, websites and stuff that you can, like, design your own, and—

Teresa: Sure, yeah. Template websites and stuff. Those are also available on Etsy. You can buy someone's template and things like that. Um, and today, it's reported that 6.5 billion greeting cards are sold every year in the US, and nine out of ten American households buy greeting cards each year.

Travis: Can I ask you—

Teresa: We have—we have our children make all our cards.

Travis: Yeah, it's way easier.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um... for us. Let me ask you a question. I'm gonna try not to be a curmudgeon here.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: How do you feel about greeting cards?

Teresa: I like them. I like—you know, there was a time in my life when I was able to write letters to people. I had a friend who was deployed in Afghanistan when I was in college, and I used to write him a stream of consciousness letter a week. Uh, he never replied because he was super busy, you know, doing the stuff that he was doing over there. But, like, he loved them, and I loved writing them, and I feel like that was more in tune to what I like to do. Um, because I never just sent a card that has just its own thing in it. I always write a little something else.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: So I think that it's great for those who maybe don't know what to say, or for sending to people that you don't know very well. But for me, it doesn't feel like enough. How do you feel about greeting cards? [laughs]

Travis: Ehh.

Teresa: [laughs loudly]

Travis: Not... [sighs] On the one hand, I understand the aspect of thought that counts, right? Of, like, you cared enough to send me a thing. Like, you know, if somebody does something cool and you send, like, a congratulations card or whatever.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Right? That's great. Right? Uh, thank you cards, I get it. Right? But, like, as you were talking you talked about, like, uh, that these Christmas cards and stuff took off because it was cheaper and easier than doing stuff like making, you know, clothing for somebody, or making jam for somebody or whatever. And it's like, yeah, but those are, like, use—useful items.

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: As opposed to... like, when I get a birthday card and I'm like, "Okay, great, thank you. Now what do I do with it?" I'm gonna throw it away, right?

Teresa: You appreciate it, and you put it up on the mantle for a week. And then you can throw it away.

Travis: Right. Or you could give me a shirt. And then I could wear—right?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Like, it's one of those things of—

Teresa: Well, but that is cost prohibitive, isn't it? Either cost of time or funds, right?

Travis: Absolutely.

Teresa: So it's a great way if you don't have either one of those to still let someone know that you're thinking of them.

Travis: Yes, absolutely. And that part—that's what I'm saying. I'm of two minds. 'Cause on the one hand I'm like, "Awesome. Thank you for thinking of me."

On the other hand I'm like... "This... could've been a phone call." Right? Like, or a text message.

Teresa: Sure, sure.

Travis: And I would've felt the same way about it.

Teresa: Don't you feel a thrill when you get a card in the mail?

Travis: Hey, babe? I feel like that's—you're being a shill for big greeting card right now.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Where they're pushing that, and they're using paper, and they're—

Teresa: But I told you, we make our kids make our cards. So...

Travis: Yeah, man. Listen.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: That's it. Bebe brings me a card she made? I'm over the moon. I love it. I keep that for as long as I can remember where it is. Right?

If she went to the store and bought, like, a five dollar card and handed it to me I'd be like, "Where'd you get that five dollars from?. You're six." Right?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "Did you spend your tooth fairy money on this? What were you thinking?"

But I'm saying that, like, I don't know. I think that when you go through a greeting card aisle these days, there are way too many different things that they're trying to convince you you need a greeting card for.

Teresa: Yes. Conceded. I definitely concede that point.

Travis: That I can see where a birthday card with a nice note written in it that you send to maybe a relative that you don't see that often or whatever,

you're not that close to, or a congratulations card or whatever. Sympathy card? Get it.

But then us tart to get into, like, an Arbor Day card. And I'm like, "I didn't—hey. That is cross purposes. You print—you cut down a tree and made a card out of it." And stuff like that. Like, "Oh, here's your St. Patrick's Day card." And I'm like, "This is nothing. Why are you guys doing this?" It's too much!

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: What if—

Teresa: Unless it's what you want to do, friends.

Travis: Cards with erasable insides.

Teresa: Oooh!

Travis: Yeah. Or, like, there's peel and sti—you know, you, like, peel up the thing and it's like [imitates peeling noise] and the message goes away, and then you put it back down and you can write on it again?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Sayin'.

Teresa: So it's okay as long as you're making money off of it, but other—

Travis: No! You reuse the card! You buy it once, and then you just pass it around.

Teresa: From who? Who do you buy it from? You?

Travis: You make it yourself.

Teresa: Oh, okay. Alright.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: We'd get back to a little bit of that American ingenuity that made America what it is today. And then we give it to a guy on horseback, and he rides it across the plains like we did in 1623.

Teresa: Sure. So, I do have good news for you on this front. Because...

Travis: Pony Express is coming back?

Teresa: No.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Uh, Emily Post—

Travis: I know her.

Teresa: —had something to say about the card conglomerate.

Travis: She said, "Eh." [laughs]

Teresa: Well, first of all, when asked about Christmas cards, right? When someone sends you a Christmas card, she says you do not have to send one back. It is not a tit for tat kind of thing. And I am always inclined to believe her. Uh, they do not need to be reciprocal. So you're off the hook for that. Um, and Emily Post also says that you can send holiday cards specifically any time between Thanksgiving and the end of January. So if you don't get it off by Christmas, don't lose your mind. Okay?

Travis: And can I—I want to make an exception to what I said before. When I get a Christmas card that's, like, a really lovely, like, picture of the person or family picture or something where it's like, almost feels like an update on, like, "Look at me and my dog. We went hiking and we put—"

Teresa: [simultaneously] "This is what we look like now."

Travis: Yeah, right? And it doesn't have to be, like, "This is my, you know, couple and baby or whatever."

Just like, "This is a picture of me that I like, and basically I've sent you a picture of me in card form."

That is cool. I like that, right?

Teresa: Ah.

Travis: That feels like an actual connection thing, as opposed to... going to the store, finding a card with a lady on it with sunglasses and a cup of coffee and you just wrote, "Love Travis" at the bottom of it.

Teresa: You seem really, really hooked on this one particular style of card.

Travis: If you think about cards—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —and you think about greeting cards, and you don't think about, like, the shoebox old lady with her cat and she's, like, in her robe and she's like, "I don't know, man." Then I don't know what year you were born in, right? '90s kids are loving this.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: '90s kids are only thinking about the shoebox lady with her slippers. I can picture her more clearly than my own father's face.

Teresa: [laughs quietly] Emily Po—

Travis: I've forgotten—

Teresa: Hey.

Travis: —my children's middle name.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: But I'll never forget... this old lady with her cat and—and I think she might've used to have a cigarette.

Teresa: Maybe. [through laughter] She might.

Travis: She might've used to have a cigarette. And now... [sarcastically] in this PC woke culture—[wheezes]

Teresa: Shhhh. Oh my gosh. Alright. Back to Emily!

Travis: It might've used to—that's not a thing.

Teresa: Back to Emily.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Back to Emily Post. [sighs] Here are some guidelines that she has for sending cards. First of all, you should sign on the inner right side of the card. So that's where your message goes. You open up the card. That is the part where the, you know, the message and your signature and everything goes, right?

No one will yell at you if you sign the left side. Bebe—

Travis: I will.

Teresa: Bebe signs the left side all the time.

Travis: [holding back laughter] And I yell at her every time.

Teresa: But it's just that—

Travis: I don't. I don't yell at my children.

Teresa: —the way that we open a book, we want to open a card the same way. That's what our brain wants to do, usually.

Travis: Do you think that's different in different cultures when they write on a thing?

Teresa: Maybe.

Travis: 'Cause the people read in different directions in some written languages and stuff, right?

Teresa: Perhaps.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Um, and so sign that side, and your brain will just see it quicker. Um, and if possible, be sure to use a nice stamp and hand write the address of the person. So that's another way that you show that you care, right? And that you're not just, like, churning these out, right? This is a nice piece of time that you have spent on this card.

Travis: And throw a 20 in there!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: It doesn't matter what the card's for! Everyone likes to get money. Aww, c'mon. Couple quarters or something. A shiny button.

Teresa: That'll make it heavy. I used to send stickers. That's a great idea. You could send stickers.

Travis: Wait. To who and for what?

Teresa: Uh, to my friends.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Uh, so—

Travis: I love you. If you send me a card, there better be a 20 in it.

Teresa: [wheeze-laughs] Okay.

Travis: Don't send me stickers. I got enough of those lying around from our children who are just like, "I definitely need all these stickers," and then they don't do anything with 'em. Sometimes just stick 'em on the ground. Ugh.

But if I get a 20 in there? Even today, right? Even today, if my dad send me a birthday card with a 20 in it I'd be like, "Aww, yeah!" I've got my own job. I've got my own bank account. But if my dad sent me something with a 20 in it, I'm over the moon.

Teresa: Next time I hand you a card I'll be sure to take a 20 out of your wallet and give it to you in a card.

Travis: Hey, babe, that's fine with me. I'd love that.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: 'Cause now that 20? If you get a 20—this is science. If you get money in a card to you, you can do anything with that money with no guilt whatsoever. You can buy [crosstalk]—

Teresa: Even if that money is your own money?

Travis: You can go through a bulk candy store and buy \$20 worth of candy, and no one's worried about if that was a good purchase or not, right?

Teresa: [through laughter] Okay.

Travis: 'Cause that was card money. Card money, greeting card money is whatever you want to do with it. You could turn it into pennies and bury it in your yard, wait two years, do a metal detector extravaganza. And everyone's like, "Hey, it's greeting card money. He can do whatever he wants with it."

Teresa: Are you done?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Okay, thanks. So, again, Emily Post suggests that if you're sending a card to someone that you use their proper title. So, specifically if someone were to send a card to me it would be Mrs. Teresa McElroy. That's my full title. That would be on the outside of the card, right?

Travis: And if they sent it to me it would be Lord Travis McElroy.

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: 'Cause we got a Lord and Ladyship, yeah.

Teresa: Oh, we did, didn't we? Didn't we? Yeah, we did.

Travis: Yeah, our friend Alex bought us one of those for our anniversary.

Teresa: When signing a card from you and your spouse—and the example that is given is a cishet relationship—the woman's name appears first and then the husband's.

Travis: Oh, really?

Teresa: Mm-hmm. Also applies if the couple is unmarried or if the wife retains the maiden name. For example, Zach and Alex, right? Would be Mrs. Alex and Mr. Zachary, right? I don't wanna blow up their spot and say their last names on air.

Travis: [crosstalk] Babe, it makes me think of, like, elementary school teachers, right? Where you're like, "Mrs. Susan." [laughs quietly]

Teresa: Well, you would put their last names.

Travis: I know.

Teresa: But I didn't want to blow up their spot.

Travis: I get that.

Teresa: Online. Anyway. Signing—

Travis: Along those same lines, uh, this goes without saying, but I'm gonna say it anyways. Uh, also use their name, their chosen names, you know? And if it's someone you haven't talked to in a while, see if you could do some sleuthing to make sure that they still have the same name.

Teresa: Yeah, that's a great idea. If you're signing as a family it usually goes in the following order. Uh, parents...

Travis: Then dogs.

Teresa: ... traditionally dads first, but it doesn't have to be. Uh, and then children in the order of age.

Travis: I would actually like to go last.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: Like in—when they do that in, like, credits in, like, movies. Where it's just like, "And featuring Travis McElroy."

Teresa: Hmm. That's what you would like?"

Travis: And then you could do your youngest kid. You can put, like, "And introducing Dot McElroy." Right?

Teresa: And if you don't want to use everybody's name, if it's like—if, you know, you've got a long list of people in your household, you can always put the first person, like the head of household, and then family. Like Clint and the McElroy family, right?

Travis: "With special guests, the McElroy fa—" I usually just write "The McElroys."

Teresa: Yep, you can also do that! You can also do that.

Travis: Or I write "Travis, etc."

Teresa: A few more things to keep in mind.

Travis: "Travis and friends."

Teresa: If you are sending a religious card, be sure that you verify the person you're sending it to shares those beliefs, or that you are absolutely certain they do not mind getting a card expressing a faith that's different from theirs. You can always err on the side of "Season's Greetings," or "Happy New Year," or "Thinking of You," or "Congratulations." [laughs quietly] Any of those things. Right? Uh, so, you know.

Travis: "How do you feel about Santa? Let me know later. XOXO, Travis."

Teresa: Uh, if you are sending to any work colleagues, try and keep it religiously neutral as well. And, you know, nothing naughty. Right?

Travis: And listen. If you're anything like me... sending your brothers cards that say, like, "Grandma, you've always been there for me. Happy birthday." Always a good choice.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: Always a good choice. Or like, "Happy 3rd Birthday!" And then you, like, write six after the three, and so now it's 36th birthday. That? Always good. That's always great.

Teresa: That's a good one. But maybe don't send a happy Halloween note to a Jehovah's Witness.

Travis: Maybe don't send a happy Halloween—this is what I'm talking about! Halloween is not a card season.

Teresa: [laughs] Okay. It's just an example.

Travis: But go on.

Teresa: Happy birthday, don't send a happy birthday card to a Jehovah's Witness.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: They don't celebrate birthdays.

Travis: Here's what you do. If you want to send a Halloween thing to someone, you go on Etsy. You go—you find... a small business Wiccan person, and you buy, like, a blessing bottle or a spell bottle, right? That has, you know, a good fortune blessing in it, or something like that. You send that to somebody for Halloween. If I see you at the store buying a Halloween card, I'm gonna smack it out of your hands.

Teresa: I don't go out in public anymore. [laughs quietly]

Travis: I'm gonna smack it—[crosstalk]—

Teresa: You'll never see me in a store.

Travis: I wasn't talking to you.

Teresa: [through laughter] Okay!

Travis: I was talking to, like, I'm gonna—starting October 15th through November 1st, 'cause if you're out there trying to get those discount Halloween cards, I'm still gonna getcha.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And I'm just gonna patrol all the greeting card aisles of everywhere in a hundred mile radius of me. I could be anywhere, anytime. I could be anyone. I'm a master of disguise. And I'm gonna just slap that Halloween card out of your hands.

Teresa: Emily Post—

Travis: XOXO.

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: Travis.

Teresa: [laughs] Okay. Emily Post recommends that—don't send a "Get Well" card if you know that they are not going to recover from their illness. Um, you could say "I'm thinking of you," or "Let me know if there's anything you need." Right? I mean, maybe not that, because that puts the onus on them. But anyway, anyway. Something else, other than "Get Well." And if you are going to deliver a "Get Well" card, you should do it in person, right? Because...

Travis: Assuming you can.

Teresa: Assuming you can get there, right? Um, again, make sure that you—only send the humorous cards to people who will appreciate them. Like your brothers. They definitely will.

Travis: And put a 20 in there.

Teresa: And it is completely okay to send a birthday or a holiday card a little late. No one is going to get mad at you for a birthday card that's a week or two late.

Travis: You know what especially helps with that?

Teresa: A 20.

Travis: If there's a 20 in there.

Teresa: [wheezes] Okay.

Travis: I'm just saying, put a 20 in there! I'm actually starting to think a lot of things we could do could be fixed if you just put a 20 in there.

Teresa: What is the smallest denomination that would give you joy. 10? 5?

Travis: I mean, can I tell you? A 10, because nobody ever has 10s. Right? Like... 10s are—I don't know where they're going. But ATMs spit out 20s, and so the number of times that I've had a 20 and been like, "Here you go."

And they're like, "Is 5s okay?"

And I'm like, "[sighs] I guess. But now I want a 10." Right? A 10 would be okay if there's maybe a funny face drawn on it, right?

Teresa: In what circumstance would be a 5 okay?

Travis: If it's from Bebe and it's her tooth fairy money. That's it. That's the only circumstance. A 5?

Teresa: Okay, so from—from a—

Travis: I'm a grown-up.

Teresa: From an unemployed child, you would accept five dollars.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: From whom would you accept a single dollar? [laughs quietly]

Travis: Dot. 'Cause she's littler.

Teresa: Okay. So the smaller—

Travis: And from a baby, a quarter.

Teresa: So the smaller the child, the smaller amount of money is acceptable?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Yeah. But when Bebe's 10, better get a 10.

Teresa: [laughs] Okay.

Travis: She better have a job by then. This is what I'm saying. In this—in this economy? You gotta start building your resume early.

Thank you for listening to Shmanners.

Teresa: That has been etiquette rules by Travis McElroy.

Travis: Yeah. Get a job. [laughs quietly]

Teresa: [laughs loudly]

Travis: Keep your grades up. Um, hey. You don't have to—you don't have to get a job. Especially if you're six. If you're six years old, you don't have to get a job.

Teresa: Alright. I'm ready.

Travis: Unless you want to. At which point, I'm opening this coal mine. So! You've been listening to Shmanners. If you're listening to this, like, on Friday when it comes out, I am in Miami this weekend at Super Con. Uh, I'm gonna—I'll put my schedule up on Instagram, and a portion of all the proceeds are going to Equality Florida, so come see me there.

Um, we're going to be at—we just now announced a bunch of stuff. We're gonna be at PAX doing some shows there. Gonna be at New York Comic Con doing some shows there. You can check out all the events, everything, at mcelroy.family, and just go to appearances. Uh, and also, come July 1st we're gonna have new merch over in the merch store, mcelroymerch.com, so make sure you check that out. Teresa, who else do we thank?

Teresa: We always thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. Thank you to Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover picture of our fan-run Facebook group, Shmanners Fanners. If you love to give and get excellent advice from other fans, go ahead and join that group today. Thank you to our

researcher/writer Alex, without whom we could not have done the show. Thank you to Rachel, without whom we could not have done the show. And thank you to you, listeners, without whom... why would we do the show?

Travis: That's a nicer way of saying it.

Teresa: Oh yeah?

Travis: Yeah. 'Cause I usually say "We could do the show without you, but why?" But saying "Why would we do the show without you?" is much more, uh, ingratiating, I think.

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Thank you.

Travis: You're welcome.

Teresa: Um, please always do send your topic submissions and your idioms and, you know, just say hi if you want to. Send those in to shmannerscast@gmail.com, and address those to Alex, 'cause she reads every one.

Travis: I also want to say, uh, before I forget, went to Awesome Con in DC in the middle of June and met so many wonderful people, and everybody was so nice when they came up to, like, our signings and photos and everything. So just thank you all, and thank you to everybody who showed up. A lot of people brought gifts for the kids, which I thoroughly appreciate. Thank you very much.

Um, yeah! That's gonna do it for us, so join us again next week.

Teresa: No RSVP required.

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

Travis: Manners, Shmanners. Get it?

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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