Shmanners 381: Idioms – Part 13

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[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've been listening—no. You are listening to Shmanners!

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

Travis: For ordinary occasions! Hello, my dove.

Teresa: Hello, dear.

Travis: Ugh. See, here's what happened. Can I tell you what happened?

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: I hit, like, a mental speed bump, a mental pot hole. Whereas my brain was like, "Hey, say the thing about you're listening to Shmanners."

Another part of my brain went, "Ah, our voice is kind of croaky 'cause we've been sick and talking a lot, and should we address that on the show?"

And those two ideas happened at the same time, and they bounced off each other in such a way that made me just jump right to the end of the show.

Teresa: You know, that is perfectly relatable. That is something that also happens to me. What I want to ask is... just now, you referred to yourself as "we" and "us."

Travis: What did I say?

Teresa: You did. Well, because you were talking about the two different things bouncing off each other. And as you were talking about yourself, talking to yourself, you said "we."

Travis: Did I?!

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Oh, I didn't even notice.

Teresa: I think that's amazing. Do you think of yourself as we? Some people do.

Travis: I guess I do. 'Cause in the past I've talked about, uh, the three different Travises in time, of the decisions past Travis makes impact present Travis, and he gets mad at past Travis, but he can't do anything to past Travis, so he punishes future Travis.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I do that less now that I'm almost 40 years old. I don't—I don't punish future Travis as much, as I love future Travis and I'm trying to protect him at all costs.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: But I guess I do kind of think of myself in the royal We a little bit, yeah.

Teresa: Some people do.

Travis: It' depends, I think, on how my brain is operating that day. 'Cause there's some points where, like, we're all working together. And then there's some points where it's just solo.

Teresa: [laughs] Very interesting. I think that I—I think about myself as divisions. So a part of this, and a part here, and a part there. So it's never a ‘we,’ it's an ‘I’ that is divided.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Well, thanks for listening everybody. That's gonna do it.

Teresa: [laughs] No. Uh, and the reason why I'm asking you that is because this is an idioms show!

Travis: Hmm.

Teresa: And the—you know. I think that the royal We has spawned a lot of idioms. Not any that we're talking about today. But segue, segue, segue.

Travis: I also don't fully—is it just like—it's just like "We are not amused." Like, it's just referring to themselves, right? But it's in a more roy—like a hoity-toitier kind of way?

Teresa: I mean, I guess so. I suppose when the Queen talks about "We," she talks about herself as the head of a united—of a state, right?

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: As all of the people.

Travis: Okay. Hey—

Teresa: As a representative.

Travis: That's not what we're talking about, though.

Teresa: No, it's not. [laughs]

Travis: Give me that first idiom and I'll see if I know what it means.

Teresa: Okay. Well, first of all, I have to say thanks.

Travis: Of course.

Teresa: Thank you to everyone who sent in idioms. Um, Alexx was doing some real good deep diving into all of your great submissions. Keep 'em coming.

Quick recap. If you don't—

Travis: What is an idiom?

Teresa: Uh, an idiom is... a group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from the meaning of the individual words.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: I was very interested to try and figure out the difference between idioms and slang. Um, where I think that the main difference is, uh, slang is often used as a—as a way to speak within a subculture, right? A group of people may be in business. They have business slang. Student slang. Things like that, right?

Travis: Well, but I also—I think that there's, like, a simpler difference, right? Where slang, no matter what it starts off as, slang, the definition of the slang when you use it is the thing you're doing, right? So if you say, like, "Oh, that's hot." Right? Like, in the usage of it you're saying "That is a good thing that I like," right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: It doesn't have—as opposed to if you say, like, "A bird in the hand," right? Or "Let the cat out of the bag," right? That has a different meaning that then comes to be used something else, right? Like, those individual words don't... don't gather a meaning that means the thing you're using them for.

Teresa: Sure, but if you say "That's hot," the meaning is... maybe that it's warm to the touch.

Travis: But what I'm saying is, it comes to—slang adds that definition to the word.

Teresa: Oh, okay, yeah.

Travis: Right? Where using "Let the cat out of the bag," those individual words—like, cat doesn't become secret, right? Bag doesn't become, you know, public or whatever, right? You're not changing the definition of those words.

Teresa: Yes. And also, slang is often just spoken, where idioms are used in written word as well.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So, okay. Um, here's the first one. "What's good for the goose is good for the gander."

Travis: So—

Teresa: And sometimes people will say the opposite. "What's good for the goose isn't always good for the gander."

Travis: So—

Teresa: Less common.

Travis: When I hear this I think about it like the definition in context, right? Of, like, if a husband is like, "I'm gonna go hang out with my friends," right? And then the next day the woman's like, "Well, what's good for the goose is good for the gander. Tonight I'm going to hang out with my friends and get drunk and party." Right? That's what I think it means. Of like, "Oh, well, if you get to do it then I get to do it."

Teresa: Sure. Sure. It's a saying that something that's good for you is probably good for somebody else too. Right?

Travis: Yeah, but it's usually—I always think of it in the context of—it's a little bit like retribution-y, almost. Like, punitive a little bit.

Teresa: Hmm.

Travis: Of like, "Oh. So you get to go out and party but I don't? Nuh-uh-uh. What's good for the goose is good for the gander."

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: That's how I think of it.

Teresa: Sure, I guess so. If it's good for you in any way that's good, it's good for somebody else too.

Travis: It's kind of like, if you get to do it I get to do it. Yeah?

Teresa: Uh, thank you, Mica, for submitting this. Here's the thing. Some people also say "What's good for the goose isn't always good for the gander."

Meaning that two people in a similar situation don't have the same needs.

Travis: So a gander's a female goo—a f—no, male goose.

Teresa: The opposite, yes.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: The gander is the male of the goose's species.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Um, and so we have this phrase because of cooking.

Travis: Ohhh. I would've guessed farming.

Teresa: Well, goose was a very popular thing to farm for a while, and to eat, because of farming.

Travis: For a long time, like, uh, especially if you're talking about, like, Britain, uh, go-to bird for fancy things. They weren't doing turkeys.

Teresa: Indeed, indeed.

Travis: Turkeys was an American thing.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And so if you're doing, you know, Christmas, you're doing Easter, you're doing these things, and you wanted to cook a bird for it, you were doing goose.

Teresa: That's right. And the male goose, like you said, is called the gander, so the phrase started as a joke about the way that you served the meat. The sauce that you made for a female bird was gonna be just as good on the male bird, because their meat was basically the same.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Um, however... over the years, the phrase has evolved in some very interesting ways. Some cases, the geese is completely eliminated. "What's good for the woman is also good for the men," right?

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Also, like we said, "Good for the goose isn't always good for the gander," meaning the opposite of those ways. But I don't think that's necessarily the correct use of the idiom, although the idiom makes sense that way.

Travis: Sure, but it feels like that's a completely different thing. Like, okay, yeah, that's a new turn of phrase based off an existing idiom.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Not a different form of the same idiom.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And maybe it got switched into woman and men, or group, and us, and all that kind of stuff, because people forgot what a gander is. [laughs quietly]

Travis: It also kind of feels like a thing, the second one, the different version, for some reason it gives me this vibe of like, they would say that to, like, fight women's suffrage or, like, for pro—

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: Of like, "Well," and be like, "What's good for the goose is good for the gander." [unintelligible]

"Well, well, well, now hold on. What's good for the goose isn't always good for ga—" right? Uh, I don't like that.

Teresa: I don't like it either.

Travis: Because the first version is like—feels like saying, like, we're equal? And the second one's like, "Well, hold on. [laughs] Let's not jump to—oh, equal, you say? I don't know about all this."

Teresa: [laughs] But I do like it in the way of using what one person wants might not be what everybody wants.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: I like that idea.

Travis: Yeah. But you can just say different strokes for different folks at that point.

Teresa: That's true.

Travis: That's a much better way to say it.

Teresa: Speaking of male geese...

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: ... here's another saying.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Uh, submitted by Taylor.

"Take a gander at."

Travis: Can I tell you? I didn't even think of that as an idiom.

Teresa: Oh yeah?

Travis: Now I'm kind of going back and backpedaling what I said earlier about changing the definition of things. Whenever I've heard "Just take a gander at it," I've just thought of gander as another word for look. Take a gander at it. Is it because of the long neck and they can, like, swivel around and look at things? Yeah?

Teresa: Yes!

Travis: Ah, take a gander at it just means like, "Look at this," but it's usually used in, like, a, "You're not gonna believe this" or like, "Whoa! Take a gander at that." There's usually an element of... surprise, doubt. "This is extraordinary." Like, uh, "Oh, you think you know all about it? Well, take a gander at this." Right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. So it started to pop up in publications around the 1800's. But it really made its home first in slang, right? Uh, around the turn of the century, last century. So it was common to hear the phrase in the

early 1900's, and like you said, it was a play on the way that geese would stretch their necks out to look at something. Isn't it interesting how that—how "take a gander at," right? "Take a look at," from the goose stretching, didn't turn into "take a goose at"? [laughs]

Travis: Well, I have to think by then maybe they were already using goose for, like, pinching a bottom or something, you know what I mean?

Teresa: Oh, 'cause you—the way a goose bites.

Travis: Yeah, so like, "Oh, you goosed him." And [unintelligible] like, "Take a goose at this" could be very confusing. Right?

Teresa: Very confusing. It's true, it's true.

Travis: That's interesting to me, because I immediately pictured, like, any time—like, I was thinking about, uh, like, Charlotte's Web and stuff like that. Any time there's, like, uh, anthropomorphic goo—they do have them do that, like, "Hmm? What? Huh?" They seem very nosy in their, like, uh, way that they do it. So it immediately made sense.

Teresa: Uh, here's another one. "Tuckered out." I have often heard "Plumb tuckered out."

Travis: Oh, I say this one all the time!

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: This means just like, "I'm worn out. I'm tired. I could fall right asleep. I'm exhausted. I don't wanna go anymore."

Teresa: Yes. Thea, uh, suggested this one. And it, again, came from the mid-1800's, first showing up in 1939 in the Wisconsin Inquirer.

Travis: Can I guess? Is it, like, related to, like, being tucked in?

Teresa: Hmm... may—I mean, maybe. But not—not really. There's a few options, okay? So in the newspaper they wrote:

"I reckoned to have got to the tavern by sundown, but I haven't, as I'm prodigiously tuckered out."

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So, one option is that the word "tuck" derives from an Old English word meaning "to punish or torment." Making sense in the way of, like, being tuckered out is usually indicative that your body can't take anymore.

Travis: Oh, okay. Yeah. I've put it to the limit. I can't anymore.

Teresa: You've been tormented to your limit, right? And now you have to go to sleep. But there is another one.

"Tucker" is an occupational surname referring to weaving. It means cloth softener or cloth weaver in German.

Travis: That's gotta be related to tucking someone in, right? If you're talking about cloth and you're putting the cloth over somebody and tucking 'em in, it has to be related, right?

Teresa: Sure, but it's tuckered out, not tucked in.

Travis: I'm just saying, but the fact that tuck is there in both has to be connected, right?

Teresa: Or perhaps that weaving is a full body activity, right?

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: You have to warp the loom, you have to loop the threads, you have to beat back the threads, and it's not uncommon for weavers to experience shoulder pain or general body discomfort after doing a repetitive motion like this for a long time. So it could be the phrase "tuckered out" comes from a person who is exhausted from weaving too much.

Travis: Okay, yeah. People probably don't think of that now, but a loom is like a giant machine that you're, like, stretching out fully, stepping over, grabbing, [breathing heavily]. It's a lot of work, if you've never seen it done.

Teresa: Absolutely. Here's another one. "Foot the bill."

Travis: Okay. So—

Teresa: Suggested by Therese.

Travis: Once again, this is blowing my mind, 'cause tuckered out, foot the bill, and take a gander at, I would not have thought of as idioms. It just feels like, that's just things you say. So foot the bill is like, you're paying for everything. But usually, once again, in kind of a grandiose way. Like you would say, like, "Yeah, it was a big, lavish, wedding. And the father-in-law's footin' the bill." Right? There would be—it wouldn't just be like, "I'd like to take you to dinner and I'm gonna foot the bill." Like, you wouldn't really say it that way. It's usually like, "It was very expensive, and they paid all of it."

Teresa: Yes. This actually comes from bookkeeping, which makes sense to me, right? Because it's about, uh, paying a—paying a bill is something that you would put down in your bookkeeping.

Um, but the phrase comes from the 1800's, when we still added up expenses in ledgers, right? Great big books. Um, so the total of an account was always written at the bottom of the page, which is typically called the foot, right?

Travis: [gasps]

Teresa: The header and the footer.

Travis: Ohh. What? Yeah!

Teresa: So the person who footed, or added up the total, was responsible for paying the bill.

Travis: That makes so much sense.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I lo—can I tell you? It satisfies the heck out of my ding-dang brain.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: When the idiom, like, origin is so cut and dry like that. We have some sometimes where it's like, "Well, it could be this, it could be that, or it could be this."

And you're like, "Well, all those kind of make sense, or—uh, I don't know."

But when you have one who's like, "It's this."

Ohhh! It's so great! I love it so much!

Teresa: [laughs] So even though we got rid of that in accounting, we don't usually keep great big books and footers and all kinds of ledgers like that, we did keep the phrase.

Travis: There's a word for that, and I can't—it's anachro—it's ba—it sounds like anachronism but it's not. When there's a thing that, like, is outdated and we still do. Like, um, for example when you take a picture using an app and it makes, like, a camera shutter sound, right?

Teresa: [simultaneously] It makes a click.

Travis: Or like when you type onto the keyboard of a phone and it makes clicks, right? And you're like, there's no reason to do that, except that that's what it used to do. And so that's gotta be something like that, right?

Teresa: I mean, it's the same reason why when you call someone, like, the picture of the phone, right? You look at my phone here. The picture of the phone is the handset of, like, a rotary telephone. But people don't really use those anymore.

Travis: Yeah. But we know what it is anyways.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: We're gonna take a quick break for a thank you note for our sponsor. We'll be right back with more idioms.

[theme music plays]

Travis: You know, in this day and age, Teresa...

Teresa: Mm-hmm?

Travis: We have a lot to teach each other.

Teresa: Oh!

Travis: Ooh! This show is all about teaching people.

Teresa: Indeed.

Travis: Right? You learn interesting things, all this stuff. But maybe you're like, "I want to do an online course, right? Where I teach people to weave," perhaps. Who knows, right?

But how do you do that? Well, I'm gonna recommend you check out Podia. P-O-D-I-A.

Teresa: Oh, like podium.

Travis: Yes. Yeah, sure, okay.

Teresa: Yeah, which you would teach from.

Travis: Yeah, okay, yeah, okay, great.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Or that I might stand on top of and be worshiped. One of those two.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: So it's a platform that gives you everything you need to run an online business. It has a website builder. It can host and sell online courses or digital downloads and distribute your email marketing right in your online community. All kinds of stuff. It's easy to set up, edit, and design yourself. No tech expert required, or techspert, if you will.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Because I love a portmanteau. SO, listen. We need to share this information, right? Because it's too late.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: What does that mean? I don't know.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: That's how scary it is. Everything is in one place with one login. You don't have to figure out how to use or connect a bunch of tools, all that stuff. It all just works. And it all just works together. Podia also starts at the best price: free.

Teresa: Yay!

Travis: Yay! You can start a community, build a full website, make your products, and start your email marketing all for free when you sign up at Podia, P-O-D-I-A, podia.com/shmanners.

[music plays]

Jordan: I'm Jordan Crucciola, host of Feeling Seen, where we start by asking our guests just one question. What movie character made you feel seen?

Speaker 2: I knew exactly what it was.

Speaker 3: Clementine from Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind.

Speaker 4: Joy Wang/Jobu Tupaki.

Jordan: That one question launches amazing conversations about their lives, the movies they love, and about the past, present, and future of entertainment.

Speaker 5: Roy in, uh, Close Encounters of the Third Kind.

Speaker 6: I worry about what this might say about me, but I've brought Tracy Flick in the film Election.

Jordan: So if you like movies, diverse perspectives, and great conversations, check us out.

Speaker 7: Oof. This is real.

Jordan: New episodes of Feeling Seen drop every week on Maximumfun.org.

[music and ad end]

[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?

This podcast has game after game, and brilliant guests who come play 'em!

The host is named Dave, it could be your fave, so try it. Life won't be the same.

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]

Dave: Troubled Waters is the answer.

Speaker 3: To this question and all of my life's problems.

Dave: Now, legally we actually can't guarantee that. But you can find it on Maximumfun.org, or wherever you get your podcasts.

[music and ad end]

Travis: Okay. What's our next idiom?

Teresa: Our next one is "eyes peeled," suggested by David.

Travis: Well, this is like, you're on the lookout, right? You're looking around. Uh, but you're not just looking for something. It's more saying, like, be aware, right? Be on guard. Be, uh... uh, ready to see something. Keep your eyes peeled.

Teresa: Yes. Although, eh...

Travis: Hm? Uh?

Teresa: It's up for debate. It could be a reference to fruit peels.

Travis: Right, that's what I thought. 'Cause I immediately picture grape.

Teresa: Yes. Once you've peeled the fruit, it is completely open.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Right? More likely it's an exaggeration of suggesting that you will peel back your eyelids so nothing can impede your vision.

Travis: Oh. Well, those feel connected, though, don't they?

Teresa: A little bit.

Travis: Like, you're talking about peeling back your eyelids like you would peel the skin of a fruit. Like, I don't think that those are separate ideas.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Right? I don't think—it might not be a direct reference to a peel—like, your—the peel of your eyes, so much as you're peeling back the eyelids like you would an orange or something.

Teresa: Right. But it—it's suggests... maybe a earlier turn of phrase was "keeping your eyes skinned."

Travis: [disgusted noises] Nope.

Teresa: Ew. [laughs]

Travis: That feels like a threat, though.

Teresa: I know.

Travis: See, that's why it feels different, because that feels like something that we're talking, like, 1500's, right? And you're like, a tough, like, leader of an army. You're like a Genghis Khan type. Right? If you're casting for it you'd be like, "I want a Genghis Khan type."

And he would, like, look at his soldiers and be like, "If anyone get through here... like, I'm gonna flay you. So you better keep your eyes skinned, or I'll skin you." Right? That feels like a thing! Right?

Teresa: Which I think—I mean, to my ear, that has one of those, like, opposite meaning kind of things, like quiet and quite, right? Where if something is—we know something is skinned, the skin is removed. But when you think about keeping your eyes skinned, I almost think about keeping the skin—

Travis: Well, 'cause you would skin a drum to put the lid on.

Teresa: I would think keeping the skin on top of your eyeball.

Travis: Once again, contronyms. That's what that—

Teresa: Contronyms.

Travis: That's what that—they're called contronyms. Where you would say like, "That's not quite it," right? Or, like... uh, what's one—

Teresa: Or something was quite good, across the pond, does not mean that it was very good.

Travis: Well, there's one—I'm trying to remember—I think it's like fast, right? Where stuck fast means it's stuck still, right? But you're running fast means you're actually moving very quickly.

Teresa: Indeed.

Travis: Um, but I still think that they're—if you're saying keep your eyes skinned and using that terminology, it feels like there's an element of fear in it. Right?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Like, "Keep your eyes skinned, or else."

Teresa: Some say that this expression came from the British police in the early 1800's. Uh, in 1829 the first professional police force was established in London by Home Security Secretary Sir Robert Peel.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: So shortly after, police officers started to be referred to as peelers, since they reported everything they saw back to Sir Peel at his office, right? So keeping your eyes peeled could be related to the idea of the cops keeping a close watch to report their findings back to Peel.

Travis: Mm-hmm. This makes a lot of sense, because did you know TSA was founded by George "See Something, Say Something."

Teresa: [laughs] This is also why British cops are called bobbies, because Sir Robert Peel.

Travis: Okay. I feel like British people have so much more fun with, like, slang and turns of phrase. Where it's just like, "Ah, yeah, we're gonna call 'em this."

And it's everybody's having a lot more slang fun over there.

Teresa: [laughs] I don't know. We might be out of touch. The you—the youths, they have their own slangs.

Travis: That's probably true.

Teresa: Okay. Here's one. "Down to the wire," suggested by Houston.

Travis: So this is like at the last second, right? Or like, "Oh, I gotta finish this assignment. It's down to the wire," right? I gotta turn it in in, like, ten minutes. It's down to the wire.

Teresa: Where did it come from, though?

Travis: [hisses] Okay. So it's not—the problem is—can I tell you problem? As soon as I thought of it, it connected to, like, four different idioms that are about horse racing.

Teresa: That's where it's from!

Travis: Is it?!

Teresa: Horse racing!

Travis: Ahh, okay, awesome. 'Cause immediately I was thinking, like, uh, neck and neck, by a nose, race to the finish, okay.

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. In the 1800's it was practiced to stretch a wire across and above the track at the finish line, so if it came down to the wire, that meant there was no clear winner until the very last possible moment. And so this was extended into figurative language around 1900, and we say it all the time today.

Travis: I can't believe I got that. I feel pretty good. Though to be fair, it's not a strong leap to go, like, "Okay, this is about timing a thing, about down to the last second. It's probably ra—like, a racing thing."

It's not that big a leap. But I'm still impressed with myself.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Constantly.

Teresa: [laughs] Here are some fun phrases from other families around the world. They're probably idioms. Um, Lauren M. wrote in some Australian.

Travis: Oh, I love Australian slang. I was just talking about this on My Brother, My Brother, and Me. Of, like, Australian slang is wild and great and I love it so much.

Teresa: The Australian equivalent to "this guy" is "this little black duck."

Travis: [gasps] That's great! That's great!

Teresa: [laughs] I love—I love how evocative it is, right?

Travis: Yeah. "Who has two thumbs and is awesome? This little black duck. Ahhh, yeah, yeah, yeah." Alright.

Teresa: And then, um, swings and roundabouts is something that one says when you have two options that are both of equal value.

Travis: Oh. So like you could either play on the swings or, like, uh, a go-round? You know, [unintelligible].

Teresa: I guess so.

Travis: Yeah. A roundabout is—I gotta think is a word for, you know—I don't wanna say merry-go-round, but that's not it. But you know that thing which is like a big circle—

Teresa: The little push wheel.

Travis: That, like, kids hold on to the bars and you spin it as fast as you can to see who flies off.

Teresa: Yep.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Here's another one. "better than a slap in the face with a wet fish."

Travis: Now... I—I've heard versions—I don't know if I've heard that exact one, right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: But "better than a slapped bottom" is one I've heard before.

Teresa: Or "better than a slap in the face."

Travis: Better than a slap in the face, yeah, but I like better than a slap in the face with a wet fish.

Teresa: Yeah. I mean, it's very colorful, isn't it?

Travis: Yeah. One of my favorite.

Teresa: I think that anything is better than a slap in the face with a wet fish. [wheezes]

Travis: I can think of things that are worse than that. Where if somebody was like, "Would you rather have this happen or I can slap you in the face with a wet fish?"

I'd be like, "Okay, the face and the wet fish."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Is this a thing? I'll try to censor this. But is—is, uh, like, "How are you feeling?"

And you're like, "I feel like ten pounds of crap in a nine pound bag," right? That's—is that a thing other people say?

Teresa: [laughs] I don't know.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: I've heard you say that.

Travis: Okay. 'Cause I've also said better than a fart in the face.

Teresa: Yep.

Travis: That's one I've definitely said.

Teresa: Yep. Here's one from Bake Off last week. "A bag of pants."

Travis: Now, you have to understand.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: American listeners. Pants in British is underpants.

Teresa: Right. Because in American we would say pants as the outer layer, but those are trousers.

Travis: Or slacks?

Teresa: Hmm...

Travis: Yeah?

Teresa: Maybe.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Okay. So, Emily S. wrote in to say that if you have an itchy nose around your mom or aunt, they'll say "You're going to kiss a fool."

Travis: I don't know that one.

Teresa: I think it's the same thing of where, like, if your ears are burning.

Travis: Oh yeah, someone's talking about you, or you shiver and it's like, "Oh, someone walked over your grave."

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Right, yeah.

Teresa: Yeah. It's an old wives' tale that if you have an itchy nose it's a sign that the next person you kiss is a fool. Is going to be a fool.

Travis: [simultaneously] Oh, 'cause they kiss so bad they're gonna hit you in the nose?

Teresa: I—I'm not quite sure. I—I think that it's just a phrase to get people to stop scratching their face. You know, like, picking their nose or whatever. It's gonna get stuck up there.

Travis: Or like you're digging for gold.

Teresa: Older versions of this phrase is crack—

Travis: Or like when someone's scratching their butt and you say "You're going to the movies?"

And they say, "Why?"

And you go, "Oh, 'cause you're picking your seat."

Teresa: [laughs] That's good.

Travis: Yeah?

Teresa: Uh, the older—

Travis: Dad jokes!

Teresa: Is that "Scratch your nose and you'll kiss a fool." So I guess that just means that... don't scratch your nose or you'll—the next person you kiss is not nice? I don't know.

Travis: When you were growing up, did you ever, like—any time I saw somebody, like, play with crutches—like if somebody had crutches, like, 'cause they got hurt, and you, like, borrow from a friend and you start, like, using 'em, like, I would have adults say, like, "Oh, if you do that you'll be the next one to, like, break your leg. You'll be the next one to get hurt."

Teresa: Oh, because it's very easy to fall off crutches if you're playing with them.

Travis: That's what I never put together until I got older where I was like, "Oh, it's like bad luck, ugh."

And then I got older and I was like, "Oh, no. Because, like, you're racing around on cru—what are you doing?"

And I never put it—like, I was just like, "Oh." Then again, I also had a teacher who told me if I wrote on my hands with pen 'cause that's how I used to keep notes when I was, like, little, that I would get ink poisoning, which doesn't exist.

Teresa: Nope.

Travis: That was my health teacher who told me that.

Teresa: [laughs] Uh, Marie wrote in to say that she's heard her grandma say "This is hog heaven, but honey, I'm kosher."

Travis: Oh, I've definitely heard hog heaven. I haven't heard that whole thing.

Teresa: Meaning that everyone else is having fun but they're not.

Travis: Aww.

Teresa: Mer...

Travis: Hey, can I tell you? Sad, but a great turn of phrase. That's really good.

Teresa: Yeah. Yeah.

Travis: A great turnip phrase.

Teresa: [laughs] Uh, here are some, um, Scandinavian idioms.

Travis: Some of the best!

Teresa: Submitted by Grant. In Denmark, you can “have a bear on.”

Travis: Ooh!

Teresa: Which means to be tipsy or drunk.

Travis: Oh. I was just—uh, learned there was a Victorian slang, if you're, like, half drunk, call it “half rats.”

Teresa: Half rats?

Travis: Yeah. R-A-T-S. Like, "Aww, man. I'm feeling half rats right now. I think I need to stop. I gotta work in the morning and I'm feeling real half rats."

Teresa: Uh, a “hard banana” is to be a tough guy.

Travis: Ooh! Once again, a weird thing to say to somebody. If you're like, "Ugh. Yeah, man. I would never mess with you. You're a real hard banana."

"What? What'd you say to me? I'm gonna actually beat you up now."

Teresa: [laughs] Here's one from Sweden. Uh, "There's no cow on the ice," means "Don't worry."

Travis: Oh, okay. Yeah. Like, "Oh, but—" no, it's fine. 'Cause, like, if a cow's on the ice you'd be worried that the cow would break through the ice and you'd all go in the water.

Teresa: I mean, I don't understand how many cows are really wandering around on frozen ponds.

Travis: But this is what I'm saying. If I saw a frozen pond and there was a cow standing in the middle I would think, "Somebody's gotta do something about this."

Teresa: [laughs] Okay. Okay.

Travis: Or like—especially if I was on the ice doing something and I turned and right behind me was a cow? I'd be like, "Oh no. This ice is definitely not rated for me and the cow to be out here."

Teresa: Um, here are some Cajun idioms, or sayings. This one's a little, you know, a little dirty.

Travis: Hmm!

Teresa: But... and I am going to not do very well at these Cajun pronunciations because they're not quite French, right?

Travis: Yeah. It's Creole.

Teresa: Uh, "*Larme a l'oeil et merde dans tube*."

Travis: Which is?

Teresa: Which means, "A tear in the eye and a poop in the butt." [laughs]

Travis: Oh, wow! Okay.

Teresa: Which means that you're full of crap.

Travis: Oh, okay. I was gonna say, like, "Sounds like you're having a real bad day."

Teresa: [laughs] It was said by Journey, their mother or grandmother would say that when they wanted to stay home from school.

Travis: Hmm, oh, 'cause you're like, cry—"Oh, oh, I feel so bad! Meh!" And like, "Well, there's a tear in your eye, but there's a poop in your butt."

Teresa: Right.

Travis: I love that, that's great.

Teresa: Yeah. Another one is, um—and I've heard this before in a very general kind of southern way is "How your mom and 'em?" Meaning, "How is your mother and their family?"

Travis: Oh, sure, sure, yeah.

Teresa: Right. And then a useful word, uh, is "[[*lagniappe*?]]." Which means "something extra," a little spice, a little sprinkle in there. Um, and then the last one I wanted to say was, according to Journey, a favorite pastime of Cajuns is to have a "*fais do-do*. "

Travis: Uh-huh?

Teresa: Which translates to "Go to sleep," but in reality it's what is called a late night party.

Travis: Ooh, yeah. Okay. I li—I don't like late night party anymore. Ask me when I'm younger. Now? Ugh. Now it sounds terrible.

Hey, everybody. You know what sounds great? You. Thank you for listening. And also, thank you to our editor, Rachel, without whom we could not make this show. And thank you to our researcher, Alexx, without whom we could not make this show. And especially specifically this show, 'cause Alexx goes through all the emails. So if you write to us, at shmannerscast@gmail.com, make sure you say hi to Alexx, 'cause she reads all of them.

Uh, also, we've got new merch 'cause it's November. We've got a new month. And there's a sale going on. Go over there. Check out all the stuff. And 10% of all merch proceeds this month go to the Fair Election Center, so go check that out. If you enjoy watching or discussing the Great British Bake Off, you should check out mine and Teresa's Great British Bake Off podcast called Bake On. You can find it wherever podcasts are found. If you're already a listener, tell some friends about it. What else, Teresa? What am I forgetting?

Teresa: Well, we always thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. We also thank 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.

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?

Travis: [theme music plays]

[chord]

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