

Shmanners 423: Idioms Part 15

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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're listening to Shmanners!

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette...

Travis: For ordinary occasions! Hello, my dove.

Teresa: Hello, dear!

Travis: How are you?

Teresa: Doin' pretty good.

[pause]

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: That's it. I'm doin' pretty—

Travis: Okay. Cool, man.

Teresa: I'm doin' pretty good. All counts good.

Travis: Temperatures have dropped about 10 degrees.

Teresa: Kids are back in school.

Travis: [sighs] It's lovely. Pumpkin spice lattes are in the air.

Teresa: [laughs] No, no, no.

Travis: Just floating around, hitting you in the face.

Teresa: Not yet. Not yet.

Travis: Not yet. Not yet! Not yet.

Teresa: I'm not saying that it's fall yet because we've only had really the first false fall, which we talked about last time.

Travis: The what?

Teresa: There are still several—

Travis: False fall, okay.

Teresa: Yeah. There are still several more fall fakeouts all the way through September.

Travis: There's false fall, there's fool's fall, there's fall? [laughs]

Teresa: There's fall fakeout.

Travis: Fall fakeout. Fall breakout. All of those things. But none of that is what we're talking about this week.

Teresa: No. It's time for another idioms episode! You love them, we love them, Alexx loves writing them, so we're gonna keep doing them. This is episode 14 of idioms, and they just keep coming. You can continue, listeners, to send them to us. Shmannerscast@gmail.com.

And, you know, we love to hear the maybe family idioms, the regional idioms, the—

Travis: The international idioms.

Teresa: International idioms. I'm saying "idioms" too many times.

Travis: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: It already barely sounds like a word. Okay, what's our first one?

Teresa: Okay. So, our first one was suggested by Beth E. The phrase is, "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink."

Travis: Uh, so this is basically, um... when I think of it, when I use it, it's like, listen. You can give a person all the information they might need, but you can't make the decision for them. Or, like, there's only so much you can do, and then the thing is still gonna do the same. You know what I mean?

Teresa: I think it's about the person—or horse, I guess—wanting to help themselves. Right? You can give them everything that they need. It's about them taking the onus on themselves.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: To utilize that.

Travis: You provide every opportunity, but at a certain point it's out of your hands.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Exactly. And—

Travis: This is one of those, can I say, that I know it's an idiom, it makes sense to me it's an idiom when you say it, but the idea of like, where did it come from? I wanna be like, it must've existed forever. Because you can lead—

Teresa: Since time immemorial.

Travis: —a horse to water but you can't make it drink. It's not like there was some great invention there. It just makes sense.

Teresa: This is true of all things. [laughs] No, not what I mean. This is true of everything you offer a drink to. Right?

Travis: Yeah, right?

Teresa: [laughs] Any animal.

Travis: You can do that to a dog, a rabbit, a bird.

Teresa: Even a person. You can say "Here's some water to drink," and they might still be like, "Mm."

Travis: Now, at least a person I could hold their nose and pour it in their mouth.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And they're like, "Ah, you got me."

Teresa: But would you?

Travis: No. You could—that's what it should be. "You can lead a person to water, and you can make them drink, but you shouldn't."

Teresa: [laughs] You really shouldn't. A lot of idioms in this nature are attributed to our boy, William Shakespeare. Um, but here is—

Travis: He's not my boy. I don't want ownership of him.

Teresa: He's not your boy?

Travis: He's not—I mean, listen. I know of him.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: I'm familiar with his work. But I'm willing to bet that he has some skeletons in his closet and I don't want to fully endorse William Shakespeare. I can separate the art from the artist when it comes to 400-year-dead person—or 300? Whatever.

Teresa: More.

Travis: But I'm not saying—he's not my friend. I don't know.

Teresa: Okay. But what I was going to say is, [laughs] this is not one of those.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I see.

Teresa: This goes back even further. This goes to Aesop.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: A legendary Greek storyteller responsible for several fables we know today, like The Tortoise and the Hare, The Lion and the Mouse, and The Boy Who Cried Wolf.

Animals, big part of his storytelling deal. Right? And so this one, the one about the horse, is attributed to him. The earliest known use of this phrase appears in a written version of Aesop's Fables, although Aesop himself was an oratory tradition of storytelling. So he's attributed with the one who created it.

And, fun fact, because Greek is also the root of so many other language traditions, there is a version of this saying in several other languages besides English. So a variation of it appears in Latin, and French, and German, and also several Slavic languages.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Yeah. So this is pretty much true across cultures. Pretty cool.

Travis: I would like to be—I would like to hope that one of those translations is just like, "Horses, huh? Bad drinkers." Right?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Something like that. That would make me happy.

Teresa: You mean the literal translation of one of those.

Travis: Yeah, yeah. That if you just—literally it would be like, "Horses, huh? Phew. What are you gonna do?"

Teresa: What are you gonna do?

Travis: "Bad drinkers."

Teresa: Here's the next one, suggested by Bob W. The phrase is, "well-to-do."

Travis: So, well-to-do is another way of saying, like, well off, or like, you might describe the rich family in town, right? Or if you have a friend whose parents maybe are, like, set in the way of like, they don't really ever worry about money, right? They always have the latest and greatest of stuff, new cars and everything. Like "Oh yeah, them? They're well-to-do."

Teresa: I would say not only does it apply to financial situation, I think it also applies to social strata. Right?

Travis: Yeah, I gue—yes, I see what you're saying. I think in my mind it's, like, connected of like—

Teresa: I mean, they definitely—socio-economic status is connected, right? It's all in there.

Travis: Yes. But like, I wouldn't look at Ebenezer Scrooge who has a lot of money but doesn't spend it on himself, I wouldn't be like, "He's well-to-do."

Teresa: There are exceptions, I agree.

Travis: I think it has to do with, like, they have the money and they spend it on themselves to, like, make themselves known. You know the kind of deal.

Teresa: The earliest known use of this phrase is in the late 1700's in proceedings of Old Bailey.

So, this is an enormous historical record where the 197,752 trials...

Travis: That's a lot of trials.

Teresa: ... were held at London Central Criminal Court, the Old Bailey. And so this has one of the largest bodies of text detailing the lives of lower class people in London for hundreds of years.

So this—the word or the phrase "well-to-do" appeared in these proceedings when someone was attempting to describe someone of a higher class person involved in a case.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So the words at the time were compounded to describe a member of the gentry as well-to-do, and has stuck with us.

Travis: Oh, why—but why was it those words? Why was it well-to-do not, I don't know... that's just... [crosstalk]

Teresa: It was the turn of phrase that was printed in this Old Bailey, like... I guess—I wouldn't say—it's not like a transcript, right? Because they didn't have, like, a stenographer. But just the kind of, like—

Travis: Records, yeah.

Teresa: —records, yeah.

Travis: How do they know it wasn't well-toh-doh?

Teresa: Hm.

[pause]

Travis: They don't, do they?

Teresa: You got me there.

Travis: They don't.

Teresa: You got me there. [laughs]

Travis: We're just assuming it's to do. But it could've been like, "Oh, that guy over there? He's got a lot of money. He's well-toh-doh."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: You don't know!

Teresa: You know, knowing Cockney rhyming slang, may—maybe?

Travis: This is what I'm saying! It could be well-toh-doh! From now on, everybody, when you start describing somebody who has a lot of money—

Teresa: [simultaneously] No, don't do that.

Travis: —just start saying well-toh-doh.

Teresa: Hey, how about another horse one?

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Uh, suggested by Talia R.

Travis: Horses, huh?

Teresa: [laughs] "If wishes were horses, then beggars would ride."

Travis: Okay, I like this one. I use this one a lot. This is one my mom used to use a lot. Because it basically is like, yeah, man. If you, like... [sighs] I'm trying to think of a literal way. But it's basically saying to someone, like, well, I wish we had that. Like, yeah, man. Well, if wishes were horses, beggars would ride. Right? This idea of like, if wishing made the thing happen, right? If wishes were enough to do that thing, then everybody would be rich, right? And it's like, goes with—if you've ever heard, "If ifs and buts were candies and nuts," right?

Teresa: That is a direct derivative of this idiom, in fact.

Travis: Yes. But what I love about it is this is one of those idioms where it's like, I think most people of a certain age, like, uh, hmm, when they're, like, an adult, if they hear the phrase, "If wishes were horses then beggars would ride," are like, "I get exactly what you mean."

Right? But if you say that to a child who you—I think most likely you're gonna say that to and they're like, "Oh, I wish we could go there." And you're like, "Well, if wishes were horses..." They'd be like, "What?"

Teresa: "What?" [laughs]

Travis: I think that there are certain idioms in the English language that are designed specifically to be, like, a circuit breaker for a kid's brain. Where the kid is like, complaining about stuff a lot, and then you say something that sounds just weird enough that it distracts the child from what they were complaining about. Like, "Wait, what's that mean?"

And you're like, "Ha ha! I've broken the cycle, and now I'm gonna tell you about beggars and horses."

Teresa: So, here are some more of those direct derivatives, since you brought it up. "If ifs and ands were pots and pans, there'd be no work for tinkers' hands."

Travis: That's not as good as ifs and buts were candies and nuts it'd be Christmas every day.

Teresa: Yeah. Um, and then—

Travis: Is that also in there? If you spit in one hand—well, that's not the line.

Teresa: That's not the line.

Travis: That's not the line. But spit in one hand and wish in the other and see which one fills up first?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Is that another one? 'Cause I think—

Teresa: I don't think—I don't know if those are connected.

Travis: It's not spit. They don't say spit. But it's a word that sounds like spit!

Teresa: Here's a second verse to this idiom, right? "If wishes were horses then beggars would ride. If horse turds were biscuits, they'd eat till they died."

Travis: Okay. I don't know that they would.

Teresa: I don't think so either.

Travis: I don't think they would! I like biscuits. Uh, cookies or otherwise. But if somebody was like, "Yeah, man. All the ones you could eat." I would be like, "Okay, cool. See you guys in heaven, I guess." I don't think that's where my brain would go.

Teresa: [laughs] I don't know. So, here is the origin. This is actually from the Scots language. It is a phrase or proverb or nursery rhyme dating all the way back to the 1600s when it was recorded in a compendium of Scottish

proverbs. And so, linguists agree that it was born from several other attempts. Right?

This turn of phrase specifically was kind of a... like, the last stop of a workshop, right? For example, in 1605, writer William Camden wrote *Remaines of a greater work, concerning Britain*, in which he penned the line, "If wishes were thrushes, beggars would eat birds."

Travis: Nope, that's not it.

Teresa: It's not as good.

Travis: That's not it.

Teresa: And then 1628 was when the horses started entering the chat here. Um, James Carmichael's *Book of Proverbs in Scots* was printed, and he included the line "And wishes were horses pure, men would ride."

Travis: Nope. There's no rhythm!

Teresa: Well—

Travis: The thing about it is, what works is, "[rhythmically] If wishes were horses then beggars would ride." It's a good rhythm and it feels balanced. It feels like hoof beats. Right? I think that there are certain things— "[rhythmically] If ifs and buts were candies and nuts." Right? There are certain—

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Not just that it rhymes, right? But it's just that, like, there's a rhythm to it. It's like pentameter, right? When you're talking about iambic pentameter.

Teresa: Well, speaking of rhythm and rhyme, there was another, like, stage in its growth. In 1670, writer John Wray wrote in *Collection of English Proverbs*, "If wishes would bide, beggars would ride."

Travis: Okay, that's close.

Teresa: I like it. I like it.

Travis: If wishes—but I think the problem is is—if wishes would bide, then beggars would ride. It's got a good rhyme and the rhythm is good, but I think the problem is... bide doesn't immediately make sense there. Like, I think you're using bide there to be like, if that was enough, right? If that could bide you over, if you were abide—right? If it's like, if that was enough then beggars would ride. But that's not... really how I hear bide used, or have ever used bide.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: So it's like, it almost makes sense. But someone would respond, "Oh, I see what you're going for." Right? But "If wishes were horses then beggars would ride" makes perfect sense.

Teresa: In 1721, that's when we complete that race. We get it to the finish line, 1721.

Travis: I didn't realize I cared so much about the idiom—

Teresa: [simultaneously] I mean, you really do!

Travis: —if wishes were horses then beggars—but I said I use it and, like, my mom used it all the time. So... yeah.

Teresa: That is not one that I was immediately familiar with.

Travis: Really?

Teresa: If ifs and buts were candy and nuts, I knew that one.

Travis: Yeah. I think if wishes were horses then beggars would ride, like, we said a lot growing up. But then again, my mom also if we spoke to her in a very ungrateful way she would say, "Oh, you forgot to say 'You stupid idiot.'" So...

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I don't use that one so much anymore now.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: But she also said that a lot.

Teresa: Here is one suggested by Shy. And the phrase is, "Spill the tea."

Travis: This has gotta be new though, right?

Teresa: New-ish.

Travis: 'Cause this is, like, "Tell me the rumors. What have you heard? What's the details?"

Teresa: Not exactly true. It is gossip, for sure. But the origin of this was about truth. Right? Because not tea as in T-E-A the drink. T as in capital T, which stands for truth.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: In 1980s ball culture, which we have spoken about before, Black drag culture and other places like that, the letter T, not the word tea, was slang for truth.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So tea was some truth you had discovered, possibly by gossip, right?

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And that you would want to share. And it was compounded with the phrase "Spill the beans," because that's from a similar place, right? And so it became "Spill the tea."

Travis: Okay. [singing] The more you know...

Teresa: And this entered the popular lexicon, and has been featured from, I mean, obviously it's all over TikTok, right? And, like, Ru Paul's Drag Race, and Larry Wilmore had a segment on his program, The Nightly Show with Larry Wilmore, called Keep it 100, where he'd ask his guests controversial questions on the spot. And if the audience didn't feel like they were answered truthfully, they'd be awarded a bag of, quote, "Weak tea."

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: With the show's logo on it to symbolize that they were being less than honest.

Travis: I see. Biting.

Teresa: So we should also note that this phrase is often appropriated into spaces where it is not very truthful. Right?

Travis: Mmm.

Teresa: Um, and so do your best to make sure that you don't use it flippantly.

Travis: Yes. Before any more idioms, how about a word from another Max Fun show?

[theme music plays]

[music plays]

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Oscar: I'm Oscar.

Dmitri: I'm Dmitri.

Jeremy: And we are the Eurovangelists.

Oscar: We're a weekly podcast spreading the word of the Eurovision song contest: the most important music competition in the world.

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Oscar: Ooh, I wanna be one!

Jeremy: You already are. It's that easy.

Oscar: Oh, okay. Cool.

[music and ad end]

[music plays]

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[music and ad end]

Travis: Okay. What's the next one?

Teresa: Next one was suggested by Ken C., and the phrase is "Soup to nuts."

Travis: Okay. So... it means, like, everything, right? Beginning to end. Right? Is what—that's how I would use it. Like, soup to nuts would be like, everything's in—or—okay, hold on. You're making me overthink. [out of breath]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Stop looking at me!

Teresa: I haven't said anything!

Travis: Stop looking at me! Soup to nuts is like, yeah, top to bottom, beginning to end, a thorough...

Teresa: Thorough I think is the important part there. Right?

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So if you know something from soup to nuts, you have a thorough knowledge of everything encompassing that subject. Right?

Travis: And can I guess what this is?

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: I think the origin or, like, the meaning of it was like—I don't know what time period it was. Like, Victorian or something. But like, dinner parties or whatever, a fancy dinner would have, like, a thousand courses. And, like, first course was soup. And, like, then, as part of, like, desserts and stuff there might be nuts. Is that it?

Teresa: Actually, yes!

Travis: Boom.

Teresa: Very good. The mid-1800s is what we're talking about. So you could expect at a dinner part up to 16 courses of various decadent foods. But no matter how absurd the menu was, it was traditional that the first course would be soup, and that after dessert, you would end the elaborate meal either in your separate parlors, right? Or even as a party favor on the way home with some—

Travis: Nuts.

Teresa: —nuts.

Travis: Nut—what—what business you in, Salt? Nuts.

Teresa: Nuts. And it actually—

Travis: Salt. It's probably 'cause it's Veruca Salt's dad, so it's—what was his name? What business you in Salt? Nuts. Nuts.

Teresa: I don't remember. Actually, eating nuts after you eat a rich dessert is a great strategic idea, because it can help ward off a spike in glucose levels.

Travis: Oh, okay. I wasn't sure where you were gonna go with it. And so I didn't know if it was gonna be old-timey beliefs like, "Eating nuts after will decrease a spike in the humors."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "In hauntings." I don't know. Well, so dem—

Teresa: [through laughter] Hauntings?

Travis: You would eat a rich dessert, and then you'd get haunted. Aww, man.

Teresa: I guess so.

Travis: By, uh, heartburn.

Teresa: There are a couple of different turns of phrase that this appears in in other languages. For example, there's one that is of Latin origin, from egg to apple. In the same way, you would start the meal with eggs and end with apples, right?

Travis: Do you—but here's the thing, right?

Teresa: I don't, but they did.

Travis: I understand that contextually it, like, fit a period of time where that worked. It's weird that we still might use the phrase soup to nuts, though I would be willing to bet it is very much fallen out of favor for the reason of neither one of those things are now the traditional way to start or finish a dinner.

Teresa: It's true.

Travis: Right? Now it would be like, apps to dessert, right? Like, or something like that. Right? That it would be like, I don't know, buffalo wing nachos to chocolate lava cake! Right? Like, it would be something more fitting. 'Cause like, when was the last time you, like, went to a friend's house and they had, like, a dinner party or whatever and you left and later, like, were gossiping and were like, "Yeah, they didn't serve nuts."

And you're like, "What?"

"Yeah, man. After all was done, no nuts." I'm like, "Wow. They really fell apart at the end."

Teresa: I mean, almond, uh... what are they called?

Travis: How far you stretchin'? Are you gonna hurt yourself?

Teresa: No, no, no. At the end of a wedding, wedding favors of the—

Travis: Like Jordan almonds?

Teresa: Jordan almonds are very—

Travis: Just real teeth-breakers, those guys.

Teresa: But those are traditional. That ends the wedding.

Travis: Do you remember when our children—we were, like, at TJ Maxx and there was, like, a bag and they were like, "We want the Jordan almonds."

Teresa: No.

Travis: I was like, "Do you?" And they were like, "Yes, please." I was like, "Okay." And I got 'em. And I think the first, like, Bebe popped in her mouth and went to bite down was like, "Hmm, I don't want these anymore." I was like, "Yeah, man. I tried to tell you."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: They look like big jelly beans. They're not.

Teresa: They're not. Here's another one from Saoirse D. The phrase, "Beyond the pale."

Travis: Okay, so this is—you might also say, like—you would say, like, if somebody, um, did something horrible, right? And you might say like, "Oh, this crime that you've committed is beyond the pale." Like, beyond what I could've possibly imagined. Or it's also a way of saying, like, worse than there could possibly be. Beyond belief is the other thing I can think of. But this way of saying, it's worse than I could've possibly imagined.

Teresa: Unacceptable.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Offensive.

Travis: Yeah, but more than that, right? Because it also is I think saying, like, more offensive than offensive.

Teresa: What do you think that this comes from? I know, but what is it?

Travis: If I had to guess—'cause it's P-A-L-E, right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I think it's like—has something to do with beyond human existence, like beyond death is a pale, like... the—the other side, the afterlife kind of deal?

Teresa: Uh, no. Although that makes a lot of sense to me. Because if you're, like, really, really sick about to die, you probably get really pale.

Travis: Yeah. Well, more of, like, you know, as everything fades away and you move into the thing of, like, the afterlife of, like, oh. That's the pale, right? The pale beyond, the great unknown. [crosstalk]

Teresa: Well, this might change the way that you feel about this idiom. It changed the way I feel about this idiom. The pale is a place.

Travis: What? Like paleo?

Teresa: No.

Travis: No, that's a thing.

Teresa: No, no, no, no.

Travis: That's not a place. That's a time period. And a diet.

Teresa: And a diet. Uh, it is an old word derived from Latin which means stake, specifically a stake that's used to support a fence. So if you were beyond the pale—

Travis: You're out of bounds.

Teresa: —you have gone outside of the boundary of the claimed land. And how this came into it was because of the English pale, which was a part of Ireland that was colonized by the English government in the late Middle Ages.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So the idea was, within the English pale you were expected to follow local laws and be civilized. So if you were beyond the pale, you were a boorish, vulgar, Irish brute living outside the lovingly protected love of the British.

Travis: Ohh.

Teresa: I know, right?

Travis: Okay. Interesting.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: I do feel differently.

Teresa: It's a pretty prejudiced phrase.

Travis: Yeah, I really like—if you had asked me before I would've said, like, oh, it's beyond the horizon kind of thing. Of like, the sun's—it suddenly gets dark over there. Right? Literally the idea of the light gets paler or something over there. And it's beyond what I could possibly imagine. But you're saying it's like, out of bounds of civilized culture into this thing.

Teresa: Right. Well, civilized culture in the way—

Travis: Quote-unquote, yeah.

Teresa: —the colonizing English. Right?

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Yeah. It was also used to refer to an area west of Imperial Russia where Jews were permitted to reside.

Travis: So it's bad. All the way around.

Teresa: It's bad, yeah.

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

Teresa: Yeah. So, let's instead say something like crossing the line, or being particularly crass instead.

Travis: Uh-huh. Or horse apples, which is one I really like.

Teresa: Horse... apples.

Travis: Which is a way of saying a different thing! But I like it. It's like, it's just so much sillier than that. Imagine somebody on an airplane—we see a lot of these videos now where they've just been told to leave. And they're throwing a big fit. And imagine watching these videos and just see, oh, this

person gets so worked up! And then they just start goin', "This is horse apples! Do you hear me? Horse apples! This is poppycock! Folderol!"

How much better would that be? For you to be sitting there—even if you're, like, on the plane and you're like, "This plane's gonna be delayed. We might even get cleared off. But did that guy just say horse apples? Huh. I need to text my wife about this right away."

Teresa: Speaking of replacing words for other words, David M. submitted "The poop has hit the fan."

Travis: Okay, yes. So I think how I would use it is like, oh, man. Everything has suddenly gone to chaos, or like, trouble has erupted. Right? But I would also I think want to use it specifically in a circumstance in which maybe things were heading towards trouble and we were trying to stop it, but now... the poop has hit the fan. Right? So it's like—quit smirking on the word poop. You said it and you smirked. And then I said it and you smirked.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: But this idea of like, trouble has been brewing. We were trying to figure out a way to stop it. But now the poop has hit the fan.

Teresa: Or we were trying to keep our nefarious deeds under wraps.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: And now we cannot hide it any longer.

Travis: The poop has hit the fan.

Teresa: [holding back laughter] The poop has hit the fan.

Travis: Sure. You are a child.

Teresa: [simultaneously] [holding back laughter] This one can't be completely proven—

Travis: I can't be the mature one here, Teresa!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Our marriage can't survive it! I'm not strong enough to be the mature one! You have to not giggle at poop!

Teresa: Here are some theories.

Travis: You're doing it right now!

Teresa: [through laughter] Only because you keep drawing attention. Stop perceiving me.

Travis: I can't. You're just too beautiful.

Teresa: [laughs] Aww. It was a common phrase during the World Wars to describe a messy and awful combat situation. But, you know, in the beginning of the 20th century there was an old dirty joke about a man who had to defecate in a crowded bar, but couldn't find the bathroom. And in his panic, he ran upstairs and relieved himself through a hole in the floor. But when he came back, everybody was gone. The bartender was cowering behind the drinks station. And when the man asked the bartender what happened, "Where were you when a... poop... hit the fan?"

Travis: Hmm. I see. Okay, yeah, that makes sense.

Teresa: So this dirty joke probably also was happening around the same time. And so it became kind of when—

Travis: Synonymous.

Teresa: Synonymous, right. When people were in the trenches, that it could happen a lot. Right?

Travis: Well, and it also—I mean, just from there, if you think the—[quietly] oh, god. [normal volume] Okay. Let's not get too blue.

But the nature of this idea, if you've never really thought about it, is the idea of it, the chaos of the fan flinging it to and fro and, like, now everyone's covered. Right? This idea of, it's not just something bad has happened. It's something bad has happened, and...

Teresa: It's everywhere.

Travis: It's everywhere. Everyone is dealing with it. Right?

Teresa: Yeah. Other less livid variations include egg, soup, or just stuff.

Travis: That's not right. That's—you know that's—

Teresa: I know it's not right!

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: But... when those military boys came back home, they didn't want to be so crass.

Travis: I don't think they worried about it.

Teresa: [laughs] Here are some family sayings and idioms from abroad that were submitted.

Travis: You have to say a woman, honey. It's 2020. You can't call 'em broads anymore.

Teresa: [incorrect buzzer]

Travis: [incorrect buzzer]

Teresa: So, Stephanie says that they are studying Japanese, and here are some Japanese idioms that they have learned. If you want to say that you are angry, there is an idiom that literally translates to "Your stomach stands up," which I think is very visceral.

Travis: I like that. 'Cause that is—yes. I like any—I like any kind of, like, visceral explanation. Because, like, when you hear that, right? You're like, "Yeah." Right? Of like—

Teresa: It's like that—it's not the same feeling, obviously. But when someone says that their stomach dropped out of them?

Travis: Right. Or flipped, you know? You're like, I know exactly the feeling you're talking about. Because, like, it's not just for me, angry. But that feeling of like, that righteous anger where it's like, I'm getting so angry at this person for doing something wrong that it's like my stomach has stood up. That feeling.

Once again, I will trade out words here. But on an episode of Travel Man, the comedian I think was Johnny Vegas, they went to Dubai and were on the tallest tower, and he was looking over. And he was feeling, like, vertigo, like fear of heights. And he said—I'll change it here, but like, his nethers—it felt like his nethers were fizzing?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And I was like, "Yes! That's exactly the feeling I feel when I'm up in a high place and I look down!" And it's like, my boys are fizzing.

Teresa: [laughs] Um, here's another one. One that literally translates to "dumplings over flowers," meaning that you should value substance over aesthetic appeal.

Travis: Hmm, yes.

Teresa: And they also submitted a couple of really good ones that are made of, uh—are entire phrases made up of four characters.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: There's one that is "To fall seven times and get up eight."

Travis: Love it.

Teresa: Meaning never get up, right? And then "Ten people, ten colors." Means everyone has their own perspective.

Travis: I love that. Here's the problem with seven times the eight, right? That means you start—like, you fell down, got up—wait. So you started from getting up. Right? You weren't already up. So you got up, fell down and got up, fell down and got up, fell down and got up, and then got up. Shouldn't it be fall down seven times, get up seven times? 'Cause then you fall down, get up, fall down—you don't start from getting up. You would start from falling down! And I'm not saying just for the Japanese phrase. I've heard people talk about this all the time. They use it at the gym motivational course. There's all the—

Teresa: I might need a visual.

Travis: Okay. I'm just saying, you would start from up, fall down, get back up. You wouldn't start from "I'm down, and then I get up." Unless it's like, beginning of the day, you wake up and immediately fall down. Okay. I'm gonna have to get the boys in R&D on this.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Get some 3D renderings, maybe some, uh, VR going.

Teresa: Here is an idiom from listener Emily, who submits this as a Deaf idiom, not being Deaf themselves but having studied American Sign Language and Deaf culture in college. They submitted, translated to English, the idiom is "Train go, sorry." What do you think this means?

Travis: Hmm. Like, you—you missed your chance?

Teresa: A little bit. Because you missed the train, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: It's about the conversation. So if two people are talking, signing, and a third person walks up and asks what they are signing about, someone

might sign "train go, sorry." Like, "I can't catch you up. That train has already gone."

Travis: Ohh, okay.

Teresa: Pretty cool!

Travis: I've also heard "That train has left the station" as, like, an idiom for, like—almost like you can't put the genie back in the bottle.

Teresa: Yeah, it can't be stopped.

Travis: Or the cat out of the bag. Of like, "Listen, at this point, man? It's not whether or not it happens. It's when. That train has left the station."

Teresa: Hmm. Mm-hmm.

Travis: Which kind of seems like that a little bit. Of like, we're so far into this, there's no way you could catch up. The train has left the station.

Teresa: Just a couple more German idioms, 'cause I love the way that these are turned.

Travis: Yes, I love them.

Teresa: I can't say it in German, but there's one that literally means "I have no goat." [laughs quietly]

Travis: I have no goat.

Teresa: I have no goat.

Travis: What does that mean?

Teresa: I means "I don't feel like doing anything at all."

Travis: [gasps] I have no goat.

Teresa: Yep.

Travis: And I must rest.

Teresa: [laughs] And I must rest. I'm just—I'm lying here because I have no goat.

Travis: "Hey, get up and do something!"

"No, man. I don't know how to tell you this. I have no goat."

"[gasps loudly] No!"

Teresa: Here's one. Uh, a phrase that means, "Something gets on your alarm clock."

Travis: Oh... gets on your nerves?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Yeah, okay.

Teresa: And then they sent in a bonus favorite German word to which there is no English equivalent. I believe it is pronounced *giftzwerg*, meaning a poison dwarf.

Travis: What does that mean?

Teresa: A spiteful person.

Travis: Oh, okay. Sure! I think I could come up with a couple English words. Uh, about that. But I won't, because we don't curse on this show.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Hey, thank you, everybody, for joining us. Thank you to everybody who sent in idioms. Um, these were all really, really good.

Teresa: And of course we always try to get to all of them. But if yours weren't on this episode, do not fret. There will be more!

Travis: I know we've gone through Appalachian idioms. I'm gonna have to check with Alexx to see which ones we've done and which ones we haven't, 'cause I want to bring more of those to it.

Let's see. Speaking of, thank you to Alexx, our researcher, without whom we could not make this show. Thank you to our editor, Rachel, without whom we could not make this show. And thank you to you for listening. We could make this show without you, but I have no goat to do that.

Teresa: Agreed that. No goats.

Travis: No goat! Hey, we've got new merch 'cause it's a new month, so if you go over to mcelroymerch.com you'll find it all there. And if you're listening to this on Friday or Saturday and you happen to be in the Portland, Oregon area, me and my brothers and our dad are at Rose City this weekend, and then in two weeks were going to be in Orlando and Atlanta doing live shows. Come check those out. And then a bunch more in November and October. Uh, you can find all the dates and everything at bit.ly/mcelroytours. What else, Teresa?

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

Like we said, all of these idioms are from your emails to shmannerscast@gmail.com. And so keep sending 'em in. You can send in topic submissions, or questions, or idioms. And Alexx reads every single one.

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

Teresa: No RSVP required!

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

Teresa: Manners, Shmanners! Get it?

[theme music plays]

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