

Shmanners 443: Snow Days

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[theme music plays]

Travis: Hello, internet, I'm your husband's host, Travis McElroy.

Teresa: And I'm your wife's 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: You know, I don't know if we've talked about it on the show, but we moved, I have a booth.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: And we've moved out of the booth.

Teresa: We have.

Travis: And I set up the microphones across the desk from each other.

Teresa: So now we have to look at each other.

Travis: Yeah, we can make a lot more— Now when eye contact doesn't happen, it's very purposeful. It's very, uh, Catherine O'Hara.

Teresa: I don't know, I mean, I feel like I looked at you a lot even when we were in the booth.

Travis: Yeah, but it wasn't like a challenge like it is now. Now it's like, come podcast at me, bro. You know what I mean?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: It's a lot more— It got cold again. This is, I, okay, this is a tangent. If you can imagine, I think it... [crosstalk]

Teresa: [laughing] I certainly can.

Travis: Have you noticed I, as the world, has become more interconnected via a series of tubes and wires, I believe that just about every state in like a big belt of the country, when it's, like, warm for a week and then cold again, or it suddenly starts raining, it's like, "hah, yeah, that's living in..." Fill in the state.

Teresa: You've talked about this before.

Travis: Just, like, every bordering state to your state are the worst drivers ever.

Teresa: [laughs] I do think that there is some truth to that. But also, I think it's more about the ideal that we've set up, especially children, to have that certain times of year have certain weathers.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And it just doesn't ever really seem to work that way.

Travis: Yes, this is correct.

Teresa: I think that's what it is. I don't think that there's any kind of change in the way or that people are wrong to think that it's something about where they live that is different. It's because of the lies that we tell...

Travis: It's true.

Teresa: ... about what winter and spring are. So for example, winter, astrologically—

Travis: Like with a capital W?

Teresa: Yeah, astrologically speaking, doesn't start in this hemisphere—

Travis: I don't think you mean astrologically.

Both: Astronomically?

Travis: Because we're not talking about like, Scorpio...

Teresa: Right, sorry.

Travis: Okay. I thought that's where you're going with it. Winter, astrologically, is an Aries.

Teresa: No, no, no.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: It doesn't actually start until December 22nd, or didn't this year, right? So that was the winter solstice. And so like...

Travis: But that means nothing.

Teresa: No, it means, what it means is, we think that winter starts, like, the 1st of December, right? Or even that winter starts right after Thanksgiving, like that that's fall, right? And now we move into winter, but winter doesn't actually start then. So, we have like three months of winter after that. You know what I mean?

Travis: I do. Well, it's because we think in terms of months nowadays.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: But I also, I think about this a lot. Our eldest, Bebe, is very focused on getting upset when she sees decorations on sale for a time when it's not.

Teresa: Yeah, mm-hmm.

Travis: Like we went to the craft store...

Teresa: The holiday creep.

Travis: ... on like February 7th, and the Valentine's Day stuff was on sale, like, you know, clearance and they had Easter stuff out. And she was like, "What? But it's not even—" And I'm trying to explain to her like, yeah, but they need to sell it ahead of time so you're ready for that thing. And she is deeply personally upset by this. She saw Halloween stuff back in like, August and you would have thought like someone had like spray painted Bebe Smells Bad or something on the side of our house. She was so upset. So speaking of weather.

Teresa: Yes, indeed.

Travis: It's snowing outside.

Teresa: Yes, it is.

Travis: For the one millionth time in February here in Ohio. But our children, it's a light flurry. So our children are at school.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Finally.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: It feels like since January 1st, there have been a lot of snow days and cold days because there were days where it got down to, like, one degree Fahrenheit here. Which yeah, if you're in Wisconsin, you're like, oh, balmy. But no, here in Ohio is quite cold.

Teresa: Yeah, and so we did have, quote, "cold days." And I think that is actually pretty indicative of the way that our school system is where we have a lot of busing, right? Which actually has a lot to do with what we're talking today as far as snow days go.

Travis: I also don't know if this is universal, especially in, like, other countries and stuff. But here with our school districts and everything, I've only this year come to fully understand the superintendent being like, "Yeah, no school today."

Teresa: Yep.

Travis: That it's like, you would assume that there's some intricate process or intense criteria that you have to fit, but it basically comes down to one person.

Teresa: Oh, I think that the problem is as soon as you explain your criteria, somebody goes, well, why? Why release school for three inches of snow and not two and a half inches of snow? Like what's the difference between those things?

Travis: I remember being a kid and there being snow days and there was like half an inch of snow on the road and being like, "Oh, awesome." And then like a week later, there's like three inches of snow and it's like, "Wait, I'm still going to school today?"

Teresa: Yep.

Travis: "What's happening?"

Teresa: Yep. [laughing] So I think that there's a lot to be said for all of those things. But let's talk about the idea of snow days, okay? The idea of snow days is relatively new because the way that we organize school in terms of the US is also relatively new. In the 1800s, public education looked a lot different than it does right now, okay? So especially in the US, which was, outside of, like, rural city centers was largely farmland.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Right?

Travis: You had your school marms, your Ichabod Cranes, your one room school houses.

Teresa: And normally they lived in the school, right?

Travis: The school marm?

Teresa: The school person, the teacher lived in the school. That was the school building. That was where they lived. So they were always there, right?

Travis: Mm-hmm. And the children lived in fear of their teacher getting married and losing their teacher. Oh, those were the days. Ah, what happened to old Miss, I don't know, Pennington and, like, "Oh, she got married."

"What? But she was already 19."

"I know."

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: When none of us saw it coming. It was a different time.

Teresa: So, schools could be set up however the community thought that they should be set up. And in farming communities, they were largely set up in actually two seasons because you needed to allow the families to work their land while they needed to, right? So the spring and the fall were for planting and harvesting.

Travis: I mean, really— I don't know if they would have said it, or they probably would have said it at the time, but it's part of the reason I have like a billion kids, right?

Teresa: Yeah, sure.

Travis: It's a lot of work.

Teresa: So you would have the summer session and you would have the winter session. And you would take advantage of the summer session to do things like art and music and like literature, like things that you could be outside to do, right? And then winter was usually like math and writing and things like that, right?

Travis: [disgusted noise] I like how you said it. [with derision] Math.

Teresa: Math. And what would happen is women would typically teach the summer because that was, quote, the "lighter" subjects. And then men would teach the winter session, which was more the academic session.

Travis: Your Ichabod Cranes.

Teresa: Exactly. And so like you said, this gave the farming families a way to have like all hands on deck, right? And so not only was it, like, good for the kids so that they could learn to read, right? It's also good for the families so that they could continue to provide sustenance for the communities. And you didn't have to worry about ditching school, right? There wasn't school at these times. So nobody was, like, marked absent.

Travis: And let's be honest.

Teresa: In fact, marking people absent didn't even occur to people.

Travis: That didn't exist.

Teresa: That didn't exist.

Travis: That wasn't a thing. And it also was probably like during the summer and winter when there was less work to do on the farm. And you were like, but I still have work to do, but now I have all these kids running around with nothing to do. Oh, ah, I wish there was a building I could send them to for a couple hours a day.

Teresa: [laughs] So that was just like, the farming communities, right? If you were well off prior to 1890, you often sent children either away to school, and terms were like 11 months long, with breaks, of course, or you had private tutors. So they would come to you, you didn't have to worry about it.

Travis: Either way, you weren't dealing with your kids.

Teresa: Right. [laughs] And your kids weren't dealing with school in the same way that we do today. They either lived at school, or they lived at home and the teachers came to you.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So the snow day wasn't something that really existed, right?

Travis: Yeah. I guess that's true because if it snowed a bunch and your kid had to walk to a building, either they went or they didn't. The teacher was already there, they lived there. So if you were like, oh, there's too much snow. I'm just not going to send my kid. You didn't get in trouble.

Teresa: Exactly. Exactly. Like I said, there wasn't like attendance, right? And so the parents decided if it was too treacherous to send children, then they didn't send children and nobody was like, you're in trouble if you don't go to school kind of thing, right?

Travis: Well, especially 'cause this is another thing when communities were very much smaller, if you're the teacher, right? And like a kid hadn't been to school in like a week or two, you probably saw the parents or family around and like, hey, I haven't seen Bobby in a while. He's missing a lot of work or whatever, right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: There wasn't like wellness checks.

Teresa: And they'd be like, he's a bed with the fever.

Travis: Yeah, right? There wasn't, like, truancy officers and wellness checks or whatever.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: It was like, there was community pressure to find out what happened.

Teresa: Right. Exactly, so around 1900 is when we start to see the 180 day, nine month school calendar starting out, right? And by the end of the First World War, this had spread throughout the US.

Travis: You know, I'd be willing to bet that an anthropologist or somebody could put together a strong case that this happening in 1890, right? Because

a lot of this, I imagine, had to do with like, suddenly there's kids not going to school, roaming the streets, getting into shenanigans, causing problems or whatever. And it was like, ah.

Teresa: Especially in city centers.

Travis: Yeah, and tracing that back to the huge amount of loss of life during the Civil War. And suddenly they're not being as many older family members around 30 years later to be like, grandma will watch them, uncle will take them to school, that kind of thing, right, of people having kids 30 years later, because there were kids during the Civil War and not having as many grandparents around.

Teresa: It is possible, but still, attendance was not like a thing, right? Either you went to school or you didn't go to school and nobody was like— There weren't, like, truancy laws about it.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: Not that anybody really cared to enforce anyway. And so once we got into like the 20th century, that's when they started to be more prevalent. For example...

Travis: I'd love to hear your example, but we're gonna be truant while we hear a word from another Max Fun Show. No, because we're not gonna be there— We're gonna play hooky while there's a word from another Max Fun Show. We're gonna ditch class while there's a word from another Max Fun Show.

Teresa: [laughing]

[theme music plays]

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Betsy: I had no kids. That's awesome and nuts.

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[ad break ends]

Travis: Okay, now I'm ready to hear your example, teach.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: I'm back in, teach.

Teresa: In Massachusetts—

Travis: Hey, I'm the cool kid in class. I'm carving my name in the desk.

Teresa: Gross. In Massachusetts, there was compulsory education laws as early as 1852. But it took a long time for the rest of everybody to like, get on board with even putting laws on the books about compulsory attendance and even longer figuring out how to enforce them. Because again, it was more like, so do you remember when we first showed our children, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, and the kids are not in school, and Truly Scrumptious is like, "Why aren't your children in school?" And Crackticus Pots is like, "They're my kids, I get to do what I want with my kids," right? So like, that was the conflict at this point, where, there were people in administrations that decided children should be in school. And there were parents who said, "They're my kids, I get to do what I want with them." Right?

Travis: There were parents that said, "I don't want my kids being taught in schools. I'd rather teach them myself."

Teresa: Or more—

Travis: I can't imagine. I can't imagine there being parents that were like, "What? My children learn from educated educators? No, thank you. I'll teach them—" I can't imagine.

Teresa: It was more about, I'm responsible for my children.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And if they don't go to school, that's my problem to deal with and not the law's problem.

Travis: Well, I also imagine anytime there's a big transition, right, if you are somebody who does rely on, like, farming or, you know, some kind of, like, labor being done on your property and your kids have been helping with that. And that's like part of, like my father was a farmer and his father was a farmer, right? And you're like, okay, but my kids help with that during the fall and the spring, that works. And you're like, "no, no, no. Now they need to be at school and home for, like, just this one period of time." And you're like, but that isn't how it works. That's not what works.

Teresa: Sure. Definitely. I mean, I think there's part of that. And then there's a part of like, get your government out of my living room sort of thing, right?

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: So what happened was World War II.

Travis: I've heard about this.

Teresa: You have! After World War II—

Travis: A sequel. Many would say worse than the original.

Teresa: [laughs] We have the move to the suburbs, right? Where now you may be further away than ever from your school. Certainly for a lot of kids, it was not walkable, had to be driven, had to be bussed.

Travis: And this was also a time when travel, like motor travel was a lot more common.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: That was the other thing is, like, post-World War II, there was a huge boom in like car sales and then becoming, everybody was expected to have a car.

Teresa: Right, and in the way that people commuted from their suburb to their work, children also commuted from their suburb to their school. And like people in general were just a lot more kind of, like, spread out. So the reason that you had like, I mean, we have neighborhood schools in Cincinnati, which is great, but you also have magnet schools and specialized—

Travis: Is it magnet 'cause they draw kids in?

Teresa: I guess.

Travis: Like from all over.

Teresa: I don't know. I mean...

Travis: I've never thought about that.

Teresa: I think that it just means that they can— We have a lottery here at CPS, but like anyway, you don't have to live in a certain area. It's not drawn.

Travis: 'Cause it draws kids in from all over. It's a magnet.

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: I think that's it.

Teresa: And high schools and things like that, that are large enough that you are funneling from several elementary or middle schools into.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So they can't be a centrally located and things like that, right?

Travis: Boy, if you live in Huntington, West Virginia, we're gonna put the high school in the most inconvenient place where no one can get to it. The only way is up one a road where there, you know, it's one lane on each side.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And if there's any amount of snow, it becomes treacherous.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Very, very treacherous.

Teresa: During the middle of that century, right? Snow days become a possibility, but even into the '60s and '70s, most people wouldn't have experienced a snow day because it was still thought more in the ways of like, well, just get here. I don't, it doesn't matter, just get here, do what you do and get here. Because it was thought that like, it was more important to have the school be open and kids who could get there could get there, right? But there were standards starting to come from, like you said, this very arbitrary, when do we call it off type deal.

Travis: I imagine that's also especially difficult to touch back on that as school districts became, like you mentioned in, Huntington, we used to have a lot more school, like a lot more high schools, and eventually they consolidated and consolidated until we had like the one, Huntington High School, right? And less middle schools, less elementary schools. So as the area covered by that would grow to be like, okay, but this part of town got, you know, half an inch and they were plowed, they got salted, it would be easy to get them there, but this part of town got more snow and was like the last place that the plows got to. So it'd be difficult for them to get there. Should we cancel it for them and get yelled at by them? Or what should we do here?

Teresa: Alex found an antidote of some— Anecdote, sorry.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: Sorry. [laughs]

Travis: I was gonna say, thank God.

Teresa: Anecdote of someone who lived in the middle of the snowboat, right? And their father would be in charge of deciding whether or not they had a school day, or a snow day, sorry. And his ridiculously unscientific method was he had a mark on a tree outside in his yard that was a little less than four feet off the ground. If he could stand at his door and see the mark, everyone went to school.

Travis: Four feet? That can't be four feet. You must mean four inches. Four feet?

Teresa: It is a very unbelievable occurrence for any place in America to get four feet of snow. And so there was never a snow day when her dad was in charge.

Travis: I also, when I was a kid, I think I did imagine like somebody standing outside with like a ruler balanced against the ground. Like, "oh... okay, three inches, yep. No school." Like, waiting for it to pile up or something. That was my assumption is that if there was enough snow, there was no school, which was always why I was like, "but there was more snow today."

Teresa: I know. So this is the way of things, right? We've talked about how there's like the pendulum of culture and society where we start on one end where we have like formed school around the weather and the way that we need to work. And then during this time we have now tried to squish society into the way that we've decided school will work, right, with no snow days. And so we finally, at the 1980s, begin to see that the world won't end if children miss school for a snow day. And I say that kind of from a, absolutely actually, from a privileged point of view, because there are people who, when there is a snow day, They have to worry about who's gonna watch my kids while I go to work. I don't get a day off work just because they have a day off school type of stuff.

Travis: And we also live in a society where even though America has so much money, there's plenty of people who need things like school lunches, or school breakfasts to feed their children.

Teresa: Exactly. Exactly.

Travis: And that's not always an option when their kids stay home from school.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: So it is a huge impact.

Teresa: So I say that we should find a way to address those societal failings instead of punishing children for not having to go to school.

Travis: It is that kind of thing. Doesn't that feel like if you go to a doctor and you want a cure for the thing that's the problem and you say, it hurts when I do this, and they say, well, don't do that.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And it's like, cool, man. I've like, if you say, well, snow days are a problem because I don't have the resources to, like, care for my children when I need to work and feed my children when they're not at school and you're like, oh, then we won't have snow days. I'm like, no, no. What I'm saying is—

Teresa: Exactly, exactly.

Travis: This is especially, man, I was thinking about this, we had a long stretch of snow days at the beginning of January, right after Christmas break. It was the day our kids were supposed to go back to school, was a snow day, and they were out of school that entire week again. And I kept thinking, there was a two-year period where schools and educators and everything had to figure out how to have remote school.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Right, and it's like, okay, so you know how to do that. So why isn't that like—

Teresa: What we do on snow days.

Travis: We'll have that day off and here, so set your kid up on their iPad or, you know, because for a long time, I'm not saying everybody has an iPad for their kid. Once again, another thing, it would be awesome if every school provided for every child. But that thing of like some way the school provides to connect on a day where it's just like, oh, your kid was home sick. Okay, great. We can teleconference them in so they can still watch the lecture and

be part of the thing and get their homework on the pad and that kind of stuff.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: It just seems like there's solutions for it that we figured out three years ago and then went, ah, we don't have to think about those solutions again.

Teresa: Certainly. And today, A lot of schools now have these kind of calamity days, like, programmed in, right? They have either a couple of extra days that they can be like, okay, well, we didn't need the school, the snow days this year. So now we're going to have professional days and let the teachers, like, catch up on their grading or catch up on their, like, lesson plans or whatever it is, right? And the kids can stay home or, or maybe like. We only use the snow days up until five days. And then after that, we have a couple of extra days like programmed in at the end where we can extend things or whatever we need to do.

Travis: I remember once, when I was a kid in school of being like, okay, so you guys are gonna have to come to school at the end three more days. And maybe like, you know, those three days aren't gonna be productive, right? It's not like, oh, cool, we're gonna get a lot of learning done in those three extra days at the end of the school year.

Teresa: Maybe not then, but maybe other days.

Travis: What we should do is just add five minutes to every day.

Teresa: So let's talk about some snow day etiquette. Snowtiquette.

Travis: Nope.

Teresa: No?

Travis: No. Wait, give me a second. Come back to me in like an hour. Hold on.

Teresa: It would behoove everyone to work on planning ahead.

Travis: Edu-quette? 'Cause it's like educated.

Teresa: Mm. [unconvinced]

Travis: No?

Teresa: No, it has to have snow in it.

Travis: I give up, I give up.

Teresa: Make sure that if it looks like a snow day is coming, plan ahead and have the things you need. And I'm not saying that you should go out and panic buy milk and bread, although that does tend to happen around here.

Travis: Don't do that. Don't panic buy anything. Buy what you need, leave the rest for everybody else.

Teresa: But if you anticipate that there will be a few extra days where maybe you'll be staying home instead of doing your regular grocery shop, I think it's okay to have a few extra things on hand. Also, pretreat your walkways, especially sidewalks. If you have those in your community you can put down a little bit of snow melt or, you know, you can I've even seen people online who put like tarps down on their driveways.

Travis: I've seen people with flamethrowers.

Teresa: They could— [laughs]

Travis: You laugh.

Teresa: I guess you're right.

Travis: Quick way get the snow off your driveway. Hey, here's a good etiquette thing. If you are a boss or a business owner or a manager or something like that, be very understanding if somebody can't come to work because their kids are home from school. Because as stressful as that might be for you, it's way more stressful for them.

Teresa: You might say that we shovel snow before we go, which is a cute little rhyme that means everybody, including kids, helps clear driveways and sidewalks before we make snow angels and snowmen.

Travis: Oh, okay. I can't imagine, right now our kids are in this kind of in-between period where the idea of them helping us is hypothetically true.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: But, I also know that when my kids help me, every job will take twice as long. So it's like, oh, I'm really banking on this paying off in a couple of years when they're actually able to help me. Right now, we're just getting in the groove of it. No, put that down. No, why are you, no, I already did that one. Oh, I'll fold it again. Yeah, that's cool, great.

Teresa: [laughing] It will pay off.

Travis: It will pay off eventually.

Teresa: I promise. Dress warmly and focus on staying dry. My children ask me about this. They have very nice fuzzy like, coats, right? And every time I send them out to play in the snow, I put their raincoats on top of their fuzzy coats because even though their raincoats are not super warm, they are good at keeping moisture out.

Travis: You also say very nice fuzzy coats. I'm sure they were when we bought them. Now they look more like we've dressed our children as teddy bears that a child has owned for 30 years.

Teresa: All right, blowing up my spot here.

Travis: No, this isn't your spot, this is our children's spot. One of our daughters has somehow gotten this blue rubber mulch stuff so, so adhered to her jacket that we've washed it several times. I've gone through, like I'm a gorilla picking mulch off our child, and yet somehow, there's more mulch to be found.

Teresa: I think it's a sign that she plays really hard.

Travis: I believe that.

Teresa: But anyway, you wanna focus on keeping the moisture out as well, right? So obviously you wanna make sure coats, hats, scarves, mittens,

things like that, breathable layers, right? And get out of the wet clothes once you get back into the house. And it also might be nice to have a stash of these things, not only so that you don't have to, if they wanna go out again after lunch or whatever, you don't have to put on wet gloves, right? Or like run them up to the dryer or whatever. But also maybe a kid's friend comes over and their gloves are wet and they need new gloves or someone maybe forgot to bring a hat and then you can put a hat on the kid or whatever, right? And I'm not saying that this has to do with like, maybe their parents don't know how to dress them. I'm saying that sometimes kids get out of the house somehow.

Travis: Well, we have neighbors, right? And it's like, the kids might come over and it's like, you've dressed a child for the needs of, like, walking the 12 feet to a neighbor's front doorway, but not necessarily for the needs of, we're going to roll around in the snow for four or five hours.

Teresa: Or the children have dressed themselves and they do not understand what it is that they need to stay safe.

Travis: Another thing I would say...

Teresa: Oh, yeah.

Travis: If you do anything like us, you have collected so many hats and gloves and jackets over the years where you're like, one, kids grow and seem to need eight different sizes of jacket each year. But also just like, they'll need this glove set or this hat set and then not want to wear it. There are plenty of people who don't have access to all those resources, right? And so as cold as your kids get and you get, there are people out there who are also cold like that and don't have access to the same clothes and resources and everything you have, donate those things, find places that will take them and get them to the right people.

Teresa: Right. Okay, as far as playing outside, it's important to play nice. Snowballs are fun, but like not in the face or down the back of their neck or don't throw things at moving cars, right?

Travis: You wanna hit a kid in the center of mass. You know what I mean?

Teresa: Let's just say, let's think more like snowman and snow angels and less I can hit that bird with a snowball type thing.

Travis: Yeah, don't have birds with snowballs. They can't, unless the bird has hands that can throw the snowball back, but then what kind of bird is that? Why does it have hands? What's happening?

Teresa: What? Pediatrician Dr. Amna Hussein recommends that you only play outside for 20 to 30 minutes at a time and never play outside when it's below zero degrees. I mean, it's not a good time after that, right? We should just stay inside. Also warm beverages being available once you are finished playing. It's not just like cozy, but the science of it is that it helps regulate your body temperature, right? And make sure that you have got it so that like, I mean, I'm gonna say this. Some kids get more snow days than other kids. So try not to rub it in your friend's faces when you get a snow day and they don't.

Travis: Oh, you're saying to the kids, not to the parents.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Right, because I can't imagine one parent saying to another like, "hey, in your face, Tanya, my kid got to stay home three weeks from school."

Teresa: [laughs] No, just, you know, kids be nice to your friends.

Travis: In general.

Teresa: The last thing I wanna talk about are all of the awesome snow day superstitions.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: How, as a child, were you told you could make a snow day happen?

Travis: Praying.

Teresa: Praying? That's it?

Travis: I mean, I don't know that I could remember. I do remember there being a thing about like, if you see a halo around the moon at night that it was gonna snow or rain. And then I remember being like, oh, halo around the moon, no need to do this homework. And that biting me in the butt a couple of times. But as far as, like, superstitions go, I can't remember any, did you have them?

Teresa: Yes, here are a few that Alex has sussed out, not only from her own experience, other people around. Pajama wearing, where you wear your pajama shirt backwards, also inside out, maybe all your pajamas backwards and inside out.

Travis: This is like a very rally cap thing, like a basebal—

Teresa: Yes, exactly. There are different iterations of pajama inside out and backwards to help bring about the school snow day.

Travis: Different denominations of faith that change...

Teresa: Sure, sure.

Travis: It basically comes down to a change in pajama equals a change in the weather.

Teresa: Here's one, sleep with a spoon under your pillow.

Travis: Huh.

Teresa: I don't know, that's not one from my childhood. Brush your teeth with your non-dominant hand, which I hear is very good for your brain, but also I guess for snow days.

Travis: Not necessarily an impact on the barometric pressure, but...

Teresa: Nope, yell snow day into the freezer. [laughs] Is that maybe you're commanding the freezer to work the outside as well?

Travis: Well, everyone knows that every freezer is connected to the North Pole. And so when you yell into the freezer, Santa hears it...

Teresa: Right, right. Here's one with crayons. Put a crayon on your windowsill, a white crayon, so that the sky knows what color the snow should be. Or maybe put a crayon, a white crayon in the freezer and then under your pillow when it's time to go to bed.

Travis: And then yell at the crayon under your freezer and say, "you know what you did!"

Teresa: Perform a snow dance. Now this, there are actually snow dances that are performed by indigenous people, but this is not in, like, a mocking way, especially since apparently the monkey is a very favorite dance move of a snow dance. I don't know. That's what the internet says. You could put ice cubes on your porch—

Travis: Well, if it's what the internet says.

Teresa: [laughs] You could put ice cubes on your porch.

Travis: As like a seed?

Teresa: As a seed, a snow seed.

Travis: As a seed, you're planting a snow seed, okay.

Teresa: Yes, or flush ice cubes down the toilet.

Travis: Don't do that.

Teresa: That's what I had heard that you had to do, that you had to get your whole class to flush an ice cube down their toilet.

Travis: Oh, well, if the whole class does it. Of course.

Teresa: Maybe this is an offering to the gods of the sea. I don't know. I'm not sure.

Travis: I don't think Poseidon controls snow days. You're thinking of Snowseidon, his brother.

Teresa: His brother. Run around the dining room table five times before you go to bed.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: I think this just tires children out before bedtime. So you didn't ever do any of those?

Travis: No, I was a very uptight, tight-laced controlled child who did not indulge in whimsy or fantasy.

Teresa: Some of these are new to me, but as a child, I did incur the ideas of flushing an ice cube down the toilet, turning our pajamas backwards and inside out, wearing those to bed. That's what I had.

Travis: Did it ever work?

Teresa: I cannot recall.

Travis: Okay, there we go. Hey everybody, listen, if you're listening to this on Friday or Saturday, the weekend it comes out. We have an Adventure Zone live in Tampa tonight, Friday, and an Adventure Zone in Jacksonville on Saturday night. You can still get tickets for those. The Adventure Zone is going to be TAZ versus Romeo versus Juliet. You can go to bit.ly/McElroyTours for ticket links and information, all that stuff. Go check that out.

Also new in the merch store this month, a poetry corner bumper magnet designed by Deanna Wagner and 10% of all merch proceeds this month will be donated to World Central Kitchen. And if you're looking for ways to get involved or places to donate or anything like that, we've posted a list of organizations and nonprofits that we have donated to or worked with over the years. You can find that at macelroyfamily.carrd, that's C-A-R-R-D dot C-O, McElroy Family dot C-A-R-R-D dot C-O.

We want to say thank you to our editor, Rachel, without whom we would not be able to make this show. Thank you to our researcher Alexx, without whom we would not be able to make this show. Thank you to you for listening. We can make this show without you, but why would we?

Teresa: I wouldn't.

Travis: That would be wild! What else, Teresa?

Teresa: We want to 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. And as always, we are constantly taking topic suggestions and submissions and all your questions and your idioms and all of that stuff, please send them to Shmannerscast@gmail.com and say hi to Alex because she 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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