

Shmanners 472: Homecoming

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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: I'm well.

Travis: Cool.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Hi well, I'm done.

Teresa: [laughs] Hey, you know what?

Travis: What?

Teresa: Last weekend, I took the girls to my hometown.

Travis: Well, we took them. I went, too.

Teresa: Okay, you're right. Yes.

Travis: Don't make it sound like I was like, get out of here. I went, too.

Teresa: I'm telling the listeners that we took the girls to my hometown for a street festival called the popcorn festival. It was fun.

Travis: I'll tell you, man. So, Teresa's from a town called Beaver Creek, outside of Dayton. And we have been to the popcorn festival before, and in preparing to leave for it, Dot kept saying, you know, with the beaver holding a cup of popcorn. And I was like, what? She was like, you know the place with the beaver holding popcorn? I was like, I have no idea what you're talking about.

And then we get there and all down the street, like every like 15, 20 feet, there's a little like one foot by one foot square painting of a beaver holding a cup of popcorn.

Teresa: It's larger than that. But yes.

Travis: I was like, how did you remember that?

Teresa: Street art that they do every year.

Travis: Anywho.

Teresa: That's just one of the many traditions that we have in Beaver Creek.

Travis: Name five other ones.

Teresa: Well, no.

Travis: No, you don't have to be that.

Teresa: But coming up soon will be homecoming.

Travis: But we already went home. Oh, no! We did too early. Ahh!

Teresa: I have not returned for homecoming. There's lots of bits and pieces that I don't really care about.

Travis: Yeah. So, the thing is, and maybe we'll talk more about this as we go on, but homecoming to me especially like feels in the same category now as like reunions. Where, through the fact that the internet now exists and everybody is much more connected to a degree that they want to be,

start to feel more and more outdated, conceptually, in the way that we used to think about them.

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: And I guess the primary reason for their creation.

Teresa: Okay. I would argue though that homecoming is very specific to a school spirit type of ends than it is to like a camaraderie kind of ends. You know what I mean?

Travis: Yes, absolutely. It's much more sports-focused to me.

Teresa: Sports, and also just like, in general, paying tribute as an alumnus, I suppose.

Travis: To illuminate my point...

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: It literally, literally wasn't until we started talking about this that I put together that homecoming was about alumni coming back for games.

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: Yes. It just had no, I, for some reason, I think my brain had always processed it as like, it's like the first home game for the football team.

Teresa: I mean, yes.

Travis: And so, like that's the homecoming. I guess I just never thought about like, and it's a time for alumni to come home to the school. I couldn't process until we started talking about it.

Teresa: Well, okay. I want to amend. It's not the first home game. Oftentimes, usually it is, it's like between September and October in there, where it's a game after they've played an away game.

Travis: And now they've come home. That's how I always thought of it.

Teresa: It doesn't have to be the first one.

Travis: Yes, but that's how I always thought of it. It's like, oh, they're back.

Teresa: Yeah. I mean, yes, yes. You are not wrong, my love. You are not wrong.

Travis: Well, I'm also not right. And I think that's important to acknowledge that I am fallible as a human being and as a person. Okay.

Teresa: So, it's both of those things, okay? Because almost every American high school and some American colleges have homecoming weekends. And this event, it varies widely, okay? Because there can be a very like, there can be a community spirit, right? Where we talk about, like I said, the alumni coming home, and there are parades and there are alumni events and community breakfasts and...

Travis: And homecoming dance.

Teresa: And the dance, right? And the game, right? Or it could be as simple as something that's more fostering community within the high school itself, where you have like a spirit week or maybe some kind of like exchange of like, flowers or favors or things like that. And then there's like, the homecoming court, right? Which is representatives from sometimes each of the grades representing a kind of like community spirit, right?

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: We'll get to that.

Travis: All very Americana.

Teresa: It is a little bit. And the fall timing, like we said, is essential because...

Travis: For ghosts and goblins.

Teresa: [laughs] No.

Travis: [in a spooky voice] Spooky, remembering the past! Ooh!

Teresa: Okay. All right.

Travis: [in a spooky voice] School spiiirit!

Teresa: Spirit. I'll give it to you.

Travis: Thank you.

Teresa: I'll give it to you. Because it is about a game, right? That I said is usually scheduled, you scheduled the homecoming festivities for a time when the game returns home. In some places, it's hockey or soccer or basketball, but most of the time it's football.

Travis: When you're talking about high school sports, listen, a lot of sports come close, but here in the US of A, high school football, college football, I think will always prove dominant over all like, or at least does now, right? Where it's like, you might have schools where it's like, no, that's a basketball school, right? Or that's a baseball school, right? But it's like, yeah, on average, across schools, football still tends to be the thing.

Teresa: I think so. And also, in the typical American way. Most football rosters play against a very easy team on their homecoming.

Travis: Well, sure.

Teresa: They kind of stack it that way, right? Because you want to win.
[laughs]

Travis: Do you think the other teams know that, like, are like, oh, they're having their homecoming game... oh, man.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: It's us. Ugh.

Teresa: Yes. And that is why, within a community schools often have subsequent homecoming weekends instead of concurrent homecoming weekends.

Travis: Well, so in my hometown, by the time I went to high school, there had been so many consolidations. But I think we only had like the one main public high school, Huntington High School. And so there wasn't like, oh, we're playing against another like Huntington football team.

Teresa: Right. No, it was a different high school, like a different town.

Travis: But it used to be Huntington High and Huntington East had a very, very, very contentious, every year, like football game against each other. That was like a huge rivalry. They had a helmet that was like half painted in Huntington High colors and half painted in Huntington East colors that was like the trophy that was handed back and forth every year. And they had attached knife blades as like horns to the sides and stuff. It was...

Teresa: That's quite violent.

Travis: It was. Yes, indeed. And sat in the trophy case for Huntington High. I don't know if it's still there. But I remember like my freshman year, the school had only been because I think it might have been the first year was consolidated from Huntington East, Huntington High and like a bunch of students just like sitting there in the newly formed Huntington High with all the kids for both schools there, like looking at this like helmet like, huh, okay. I guess. Well, there's a lot of tension here. Okay, great.

Teresa: [laughing] Now in Beaver Creek, I think I only recall the one high school and then the Catholic school in the area. And they had, I think, homecomings on different weekends. I don't know if we ever...

Travis: Well, otherwise the Hibachi restaurants are way overbooked.

Teresa: I don't think that we played against them, though. I think it was, yeah, things are in different leagues.

Travis: They only played Catholic football and you played Protestant football. Was that it?

Teresa: [laughs] Maybe? I'm not sure. I don't recall. Football was not the thing that I really paid attention to.

Travis: Yeah, this might surprise listeners. I wasn't a huge football guy. I didn't go to a lot of games. I did occasionally, when my friends were like, come with us. I'd be like, I guess, but I never sought them out. I almost played my senior year, because we got a new coach who was like, hey, all you need, all folks need to do is like, if you go through the training and you work out during the summer, you're on the team, right? If you can make it through this regimen of training, I was like, okay, cool. So, I did it and I

worked out all summer, and then I was offered the role of Eugene in Brighton Beach Memoirs, and I was like, oh, that's a great role. Bye. And I didn't play football my senior year.

Teresa: [laughs] Most of my friends were in the marching band. So that's why I went to football games, to watch that and hang out with them. I was not in the marching band, though. I did show choir.

Travis: Yeah, you were too cool. You did show choir.

Teresa: Anyway.

Travis: I did, too. I'm not making fun of you.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: Yeah. Let's make it clear.

Teresa: Okay. So, then we've got these traditions, and they are not... they're not recent. They're about 130 years old or so.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: Yeah. Homecoming football games have been held since the 1800s, and schools like Baylor, Southwestern, and the University of Illinois, Urbana, Champaign are a few of the schools that claim the very first ones to come up with this idea.

Travis: However, the Champaign-Urbana is where, oh, I'm forgetting his name. Oh, he played Ron Swanson, his name is...

Teresa: Nick Offerman.

Travis: Nick Offerman went to school. That was a long walk for a short, for a bad view.

Teresa: [laughs] The title, however, is usually given to the University of Missouri, credited with holding the very first homecoming game in 1911, where they directly reached out and encouraged alumni to attend. So this is where the two kind of, the twain shall meet, right? Where it's like not just the homecoming game and like a reunion, but it is together.

Travis: So, this also definitely then has its roots in like fundraising, right? Any time a college is reaching out to alumni and being like, hey, why don't you all come back and get together and celebrate? And you know what also would be great? Remembering how great it was to be here and maybe kicking us a few bucks.

Teresa: I mean, perhaps. I don't think that that's specifically related.

Travis: I'm reading between the lines and I'm telling you that's exactly what it is.

Teresa: So usually, the Tigers played against the Kansas J Hawks, which had been a rivalry since 1891. And they would normally play in neutral territory, but a new rule enacted that that year in 1911 required that college football teams play on their own campuses. So, before that, you might have had like a park or even a stadium that you would use.

Travis: Right. Well, there's lots of colleges, like for a long time, Marshall, I think, didn't have a stadium, something like that, where there's lots of places where they use, especially if there's like a professional sports team, you know, because in NFL season, and... I don't know, but they will have other stadiums that they will play at if the college isn't big enough to have its own stadium, but is big enough to have its own football team. I've heard of that before.

Teresa: So then what happened is Chester Brewer, which is a really great name for a football coach.

Travis: And a very 1911 name, frankly.

Teresa: [laughs] He was the athletic.

Travis: Douglas Prohibition.

Teresa: Douglas... Douglas?

Travis: No? That doesn't strike you. Striker Prohibition, what about that? Elliott Prohibition.

Teresa: Maybe that one. He was the athletic director, decided to invite all the alumni to, quote, "come home" to christen the brand-new football field. Right. So, he wanted like a big turnout at this homecoming game.

Travis: And everybody's smashing champagne bottles all over it.

Teresa: I guess. That sounds dangerous.

Travis: Or sprinkling holy water on it.

Teresa: Okay, sure. Because the smashing of bottles and football doesn't seem like a very good idea.

Travis: Okay, but, babe, you know that happens, right?

Teresa: People smash bottles at homecoming?

Travis: Listen, maybe not homecoming. But I think football hooligans, both in soccer and American football, there's bottle smashing. I don't know how to break it to you. Bottles get smashed sometimes. You can't win a game without smashing a few bottles. That's what I always say.

Teresa: Okay. Dangerous. Good thing I stay away. So then, he pulled out all the stops for the game.

Travis: If someone was like, do you want to go to this football game with me? And you're like, too much broken glass.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: What? Yeah.

Teresa: That would be wild.

Travis: I was going to wear open toed shoes.

Teresa: That does sound like something I would say. Yeah. [laughing] Anyway. So not only just the game, but he held a full-scale parade and a spirit rally with a bonfire, which I think...

Travis: Bonfire is a big thing at ours. Yeah.

Teresa: That's something that I see a lot in like, like TV and movies, right? They have a bonfire the night of the game, or the night before the game. Grease comes to mind. The pep rally and the bonfire.

Travis: I haven't watched it, but it sounds like something they do.

Teresa: It does sound like something.

Travis: We had a big bonfire. So, we had at our school, like here's the school, right? And then there was like a practice field, and then like the stadium. Um, and I assume that the practice field and the stadium were separate because other groups would use the practice field for thing, you know, or for the stadium and the practice field, I guess, you know, track and field, marching band, stuff like that. And in the middle of the practice field, they would have the bonfire.

Just like huge, you know, pile of wood, you know, in a conical manner, lit on fire every year. And when I was like a high school, it's like, this is awesome. And now as an adult, when I think about that, I'm like, you just like... yeah, granted, it was away from everything, but that's part of the school. And it was a practice field.

Teresa: Yeah, that's a terrible idea.

Travis: So, it's just like, yeah, for a couple of weeks after that, there's just a big scorched circle in the middle of the practice field.

Teresa: I do not remember that being part of the festivities in Beaver Creek.

Travis: Now, Beaver Creek, Dayton, Ohio in general, seems not as... what's the word I'm looking for? Mountain culture as Huntington, West Virginia, where we're like, oh, a big fire, cool. Well, let's have it somewhere where we can keep an eye on it right next to the school.

Teresa: So nearly 10,000 alumni came to this celebration. And it was such a hit that the school decided to make it an annual tradition, even though at this particular game, it ended in a tie.

Travis: What?

Teresa: Yeah, it was a tie three to three.

Travis: Did you think the other team was like, three to three?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: So, it's field goal, field goal? Come on.

Teresa: Sorry.

Travis: Come on. If you're going to have a tie, maybe like 21 to 21. Field goal, field goal. Ugh.

Teresa: Oh, maybe they were maybe the teams were so evenly matched that they could not make it to either end zone.

Travis: I think if that's the case, and it's a homecoming game, the other team should throw it.

Teresa: Oh, really?

Travis: Come on. Wouldn't you want them to do that for you?

Teresa: I suppose.

Travis: Speaking of doing it for you, let's take a break for a word from another Max Fun show.

[theme music plays]

Travis: You know, we've been doing My Brother, My Brother, and Me for 15 years, and maybe you stopped listening for a while. Maybe you never listened, and you're probably assuming three white guys talking for 15 years. I know where this has ended up, but no!

Justin: No, you would be wrong. We're as shocked as you are that we have not fallen into some sort of horrific scandal or just turned into a big crypto thing.

Travis: Yeah, we don't even really know how crypto works.

Griffin: The only NFTs I'm into are naughty, funny things, which is what we talk about on My Brother, My Brother, and Me.

Justin: We serve it up every Monday for you, if you're listening. And if not, we just leave it out back and it goes rotten.

Travis: So, check it out on Max Fun or wherever you get your podcasts.

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Ella: All right, we're over 70 episodes into our show. Let's learn everything. So, let's do a quick progress check. Have we learned about quantum physics?

Tom: Yes, episode 59.

Ella: We haven't learned about the history of gossip yet, have we?

Caroline: Yes, we have. Same episode, actually.

Ella: Have we talked to Tom Scott about his love of rollercoasters?

Caroline: Episode 64.

Ella: So how close are we to learning everything?

Caroline: Bad news. We still haven't learned everything yet.

Tom: Oh, we're ruined!

Ella: No, no, no, it's good news as well. There is still a lot to learn. I'm Dr. Ella Hubber.

Tom: I'm regular Tom Lum.

Caroline: I'm Caroline Roper, and on Let's Learn Everything, we learn about science and a bit of everything else too.

Ella: And although we haven't learned everything yet, I've got a pretty good feeling about this next episode.

Tom: Join us every other Thursday on Max Fun.

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Travis: And we're back. We're home. We've come home to the episode.

Teresa: So now that we've got the kind of origins of the tradition, let's talk about modern day homecoming. So, a lot of schools decided to take this and run with it. Like I said, there's lots of... there's lots of community events sometimes. We've got street parades. We've got dress up theme days. We've got like they host like it even to like a homecoming week. Right. As an excuse to show off their school spirit and celebrate together. So, let's, let's go through the kind of events that might happen.

Travis: So, like is Dayton a college kind of town?

Teresa: I don't think so.

Travis: No, there are areas in Cincinnati that like.

Teresa: Columbus is.

Travis: Columbus is. There are areas of Cincinnati if you're near like, you know, University of Cincinnati and stuff, you see a lot of like Bearcat stuff and everything. And Huntington definitely is of like Marshall. But I went to school at the University of Oklahoma in Norman, Oklahoma. And everything was the Sooner dry cleaners, Sooner cafe, Sooner, like, named after the mascot of the school.

And when there were games, it was like, there was a like 20-block radius around the school where it's like, you will not be able to find parking. You will not be able to like, drive. Like don't try to do anything on a game day, because people would like, open up their front yards for parking and like charge people, you know, \$20 to park in their front yards. You would see people sitting there like on the sidewalk in front of their house, like directing people into park in their yards.

Teresa: Wow.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: That is not my experience. So, okay, here we go. Monday before the big game that weekend is the kickoff, right? Which might include...

Travis: Well, it's not the kickoff. The kickoff's at the game.

Teresa: Right, no, the kickoff of the Spirit Week.

Travis: Okay, great.

Teresa: The homecoming Spirit Week kickoff, not the game. Yeah. So, on Monday, you would probably have a pep rally, right? To nominate the homecoming court. And this might also be a spirit day, I don't know, like, crazy hair day or something, right? Where everybody wears crazy hair.

Travis: This is another thing in movies and TV shows, they always like announce the homecoming queen and stuff like at the dance. That's not how it works, right? You're told ahead of time.

Teresa: That's more TV and movies.

Travis: Yeah, like you know who it's gonna be because like there's a parade and it's part of it.

Teresa: Yeah, I would say that that is more a prom thing. That I think has been like, what's the thing?

Travis: Conscripting?

Teresa: Con-fragulated?

Travis: That's not it at all. It's confabulated.

Teresa: There it is, that's it, that word in TV and movies.

Travis: Confragulated sounds like something they would say on Fraggles Rock, like a Fraggles scientist. I've confragulated it, and I would love it. I love it right now. It's making me very happy to say. So, thank you for that gift.

Teresa: A note on the homecoming court. This is usually 10 to 14 students who help plan and decorate and coordinate Spirit Week. And the king and the queen are almost always seniors. That's kind of the unspoken rule. Or

in some places, it might be a spoken rule, because they are the oldest kids in the school, and this is their last chance to kind of do it. And like it makes sense that a king and a queen would be the highest-level grade. But some communities often will do like a prince and a princess of juniors and a Duke and a Duchess of sophomores, and even if there's freshmen at the school...

Travis: A jester of freshmen.

Teresa: No, Lord and Lady, I would suppose would be the next one.

Travis: And then of course there's the Duke of Whispers who brings in from all the little birds in the kingdom, the whispers of what's going on behind the scenes.

Teresa: In addition.

Travis: That was my role. I was the court magician.

Teresa: Oh, were you?

Travis: No.

Teresa: [laughs] This would be a really great role play for you though. That would be fun.

Travis: Yes, please. Yes. Who's their chief of staff? There needs to be some delegation of power. There needs to be a hand of the homecoming king and I'm willing to take that thing. I'll be the power behind the throne. That's fine. I'm fine with that. You know?

Teresa: So not only are these people usually involved in the kind of creation of the magic of the spirit of homecoming week, but also, they have shown academic and extracurricular excellence and dedication to the high school community, things like that, right? It's not supposed to just be a popularity contest. It's supposed to have a little bit more meat to it.

Travis: There was a kid named Hunter Moore in my high school who I have known since we were like little kids. We were in the talented and gifted program together, and his dad did a lot of community theater. I don't remember if Hunter ever did any, but Hunter was on the football team. I think the basketball team was in the top three, scholastically, of students and just a really nice dude who was also I think class president our

freshman year, sophomore year, junior year and senior year. And I believe he was homecoming king.

Teresa: I think that yeah, I usually even in TVs and movies, I see that it's normally kind of like the athletes that are showcased at this. Like, you know, you hear about the quarterback is like the homecoming king. And then either like the head cheerleader or maybe like if you have like a woman, women's athlete kind of like—

Travis: Or like, student body president. I've seen that in TV series.

Teresa: Yeah, things like that, right?

Travis: So, I ran against Hunter.

Teresa: I think ours was the star of our women's soccer team.

Travis: I ran against Hunter for senior class president, my freshman year or junior year, but my campaign was a bit, if you can believe it. Where many of my posters, let's see, I had posters, one that said, vote for Travis, he's gonna vote for Hunter, but you can vote for Travis if you want to. And one that said, my dad said that if I don't win, not to come home. And then Hunter put a poster under it that said, it's cool, you can come say at my house if you need to. And I put a poster under it and said, really man, that would be really cool. And he was like, yeah, dude, just stop by, the key will be under the mat. And the posters went down the wall onto the floor. And eventually, 'cause like, we were friends. And eventually, we were asked to stop having poster conversations with each other because it was becoming a nuisance down onto the floor.

Teresa: [laughs] That's a great bit.

Travis: Yeah, he is a good dude.

Teresa: And so then, all week, you would be invited to submit your vote for the homecoming court, and then they would be chosen ahead of the game to participate in like the parade, right? And I don't think anybody thinks this, but they don't hold like any power. These are like just honors that you give to people.

Travis: They don't hold any on paper power.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: But there's popularity to it, you know what I mean? And I bet it looks good on a college application. You know what I mean?

Teresa: I suppose.

Travis: I don't know. That's also another thing that I hear in TV and movies and stuff when they talk about a college application. Okay, folks, pull back curtain a little bit. I was an after-match scholar, and the University of Oklahoma reached out to me and they were like, will you please come to our school? And I said, okay.

I didn't really apply to any colleges ever. I was just gonna go to Marshall and then University of Oklahoma was like, do you wanna come here, please? And I said, sure. I don't know what that process is at all. Ooh, okay.

Teresa: And so then, there might be other ideas for Spirit Week. We could have like a twin day, right? Where you dress up maybe the, you could twin with a teacher or a twin with a friend, or... let's retain consent for twinning, because you don't wanna make somebody think you're making fun of them.

Travis: And also, hey, if you're on a school board of teachers or whatever and planning a Spirit Week, sensitivity to cultural things and historical things and all that stuff. Can't encourage that enough. Although, I do remember in middle school, we had a Spirit Week where it was, I think '60s, you know, hippies and we...

Teresa: Decades day is another...

Travis: Yeah, we staged a protest.

Teresa: Okay, that's very '60s.

Travis: Yeah, but a real one, because they, I think they were trying to make intramural sports compulsive instead of like, you can play the sports or just like chill out and do whatever you want to during recess or break or whatever. And so, when lunch ended, like, a majority of students did not leave the lunch area to go to intramural sports and just stayed where we were for, I think, until into class starting. And they're like, okay, we'll revisit the intramural thing. And we said, okay, cool. And they never made it compulsive. So, protests work! Think about that, folks.

Teresa: Nice. Might also have like a pajama day.

Travis: Sure, a hit.

Teresa: That's always a hit, always a hit. And then you would have...

Travis: 'Cause you know on pajama day, teachers are playing movies.

Teresa: Oh, totally.

Travis: Like if that's such a like, oh, the chance of a teacher playing, it's like a 90% chance that teachers like, I'm not gonna get them to do any work during their pajamas. Here's Aladdin. Right? It's a safe bet.

Teresa: Bonus points if it's in Spanish.

Travis: Well, that happened in my Spanish class a lot. Although sometimes, Senora Layman, who has the best name for a foreign language teacher, Senora Layman. Like layman's terms? You get it.

Teresa: Yeah, I get it.

Travis: She would often show us like Aladdin in Spanish or something, Jumanji in Spanish. But sometimes it was just like, Avida in English, but with Madonna and Antonio Banderas, right? Okay. And it's just like, okay, cool, I guess.

Teresa: It's cultural.

Travis: The best was when we watched telenovelas. So good.

Teresa: Ohh. That is cultural.

Travis: I love telenovelas.

Teresa: So then Friday, right? Friday, you might get out of school early, because this is probably where you would like, have like a spirit day, right? Where you wear your school colors. Mine for Beaver Creek were orange and black, very Halloween.

Travis: Green and gold for me, because they're Highlanders. So it's very like tartan, green and gold, bagpipe-y kind of deal.

Teresa: Nice. And then you would have another pep rally, and this would be where you would announce the homecoming king and queen and court or whatever, right? Because you wanted to have them available to do the parade where either, I think that in, at my town, we did people would ride in like convertibles for the parade because it was like a big like main street thing. But you could do as little as just like walking along the parade route, right?

And so like, you would wear your school colors for the pep rally, and then for the parade, and then you would go to the game that night. And so like, that's normally what would happen for like community events, and then there would be the dance Saturday night. This, I think, has really taken over culturally as like the thing of homecoming is the homecoming dance. And so like, in general, in the US, we do a little less formal for homecoming than we do for prom.

Travis: And usually, homecoming is all grades. And often, prom is just juniors and seniors. They're not always.

Teresa: Yes. Not always.

Travis: I ended up going my sophomore year because I got asked by a junior. No big deal.

Teresa: No big deal.

Travis: But yes.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Do you think we would have gone to homecoming together if we attended the same school at the same time?

Teresa: I mean, maybe.

Travis: No, you wouldn't have gone out with me.

Teresa: I don't know. You were really big into theater. I liked theater guys.

Travis: That's true. That is true. But I was also a turd. [laughs]

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: I think you would have been too sweet and nice, and would've been like, "Yeah. No, listen, he seems great. Call me in like 15 years. 17 years, and we'll talk."

Teresa: 17 years. Okay. [laughs] And so, this is a...

Travis: No, not that long. We started, what am I doing? Seven years. I would have graduated when I was 18. We started dating when I was 25, seven years.

Teresa: Well, thank you for making the math math.

Travis: We didn't start dating when I was 35. Okay. Yeah. That's ridiculous.

Teresa: Good job. So then, it would be kind of like decorated in the school colors, whereas like prom usually has a different type theme. And there would also be, you know, you would crown the king and queen or maybe give them a sash or just like a moment to shine. Right. And it was dancing, usually. Sometimes, I think a lot of communities, they either go all out on like the date kind of aspect of homecoming, or it's more of like a group thing. Yeah.

Travis: Ours was like a date thing. I mean, who were you going with was kind of the deal. But then once you're there...

Teresa: Then it became like group of friends.

Travis: It was much more where prom I think was, you know.

Teresa: Was definitely a date.

Travis: Was definitely a date thing. And like, you might dance with other people, but primarily you were expected to dance, you know, you just did like... this is my date. This is who I'm taking. And I always thought that was because by the end of the year, you've had a lot more time to like find a boyfriend, girlfriend, partner.

Teresa: That makes sense.

Travis: And it was like homecoming is like, we've been in school two weeks, you know what I mean? It was like, I don't know, man.

Teresa: At my time, it was more of a group thing. We did do like a group dinner, like maybe like you mentioned at like a Hibachi grill or whatever. And then it would be kind of like a convoy, or we'd even carpool to the dance. Or a group thing.

Travis: I don't think I went to a school dance with like a girlfriend as opposed to just like a friend or somebody, you know, until I think junior prom. And then I went to junior prom, senior homecoming and senior prom with the same person.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: But I think all the other times it was just like, hey, you wanna go with me? Cool, dude. Mostly theater people.

Teresa: And then Sunday, after the homecoming game and then the dance on Saturday is kind of a low-key thing for most communities. This is more of the alumni day, right? Where everybody is still kind of in town from the game, and there might be like a community breakfast or even something like at the school, like kind of close to a reunion type event.

Travis: My junior year, I think it was the day, if I'm remembering correctly, it was the day after prom was the PSATs or the SATs or something that I took.

Teresa: That's rough.

Travis: I did well, but I probably would have done better probably if it hadn't been the day after the dance.

Teresa: So, if you are a student participating in homecoming, here are a couple of tips and tricks. So don't feel like, like we said, don't feel like you have to have a date. That's not usually what homecoming is about. But if you do, make sure that it's kind of a, that it's a respectful ask. It's, this is still quite early in the school year, right? And so, we wanna make sure that it's not like a joke or like embarrassing. That's it's really kind.

Travis: It's so funny, 'cause I think you can go the wrong direction either way. Where sometimes I think people get into their heads that they're supposed to do a big showy thing and end up embarrassing someone. But then they also are like, I don't wanna make a big deal out of it. And I don't wanna like put myself out there. So, I'm just gonna be like, hey, are you going with anyone? Right? And it's like, when it's not clear that you wanna go with them or that you're asking them. And it's just like, hey, I'd love to go with you if it's like to go sometime. Unless it's somebody who's like, if you're gonna ask me on a big showy thing or whatever, and then do it, right?

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: It's kind of the same way I feel about surprise parties. Ask the person if they want that and then do it.

Teresa: And then as far as like dating goes, there might be like school things that you guys normally do. Maybe you match colors for dances. One person might wear like, the same color dress and tie or the same like color family kind of thing.

Travis: Matching up like boutonniere and corsage. Do people still do that?

Teresa: That's another thing. People sometimes do boutonnieres and corsages.

Travis: You can match your cummerbund.

Teresa: There are even like local traditions. I've become aware via TikTok that in Texas, there is a thing called a homecoming mum, which apparently at the beginning used to be a kind of corsage, but has now become artificial flowers and other like decorative accoutrements, ribbons and bells and streamers and all kinds of stuff. So that's a community thing that you might wanna participate in as far as the homecoming time goes.

Travis: You could wear matching Deadpool masks.

Teresa: I suppose that you could.

Travis: Well, actually schools probably wouldn't let people wear masks.

Teresa: Probably not. And that goes for my next one. Make sure that you still follow the school dress code. A lot of schools have codes as like, logos, or colors, or perhaps it's like different fits of garments that need to be specific. So, make sure that you follow the dress code. You'd hate to be like, turned away at the door because you don't follow the dress code.

Travis: Well, listen, if there's anything unfair that they're trying to set instead of like, I don't know, who can wear what, who can go with who, whatever. Stage a protest, sit in, don't leave lunch until they change the rules. This is me encouraging you, folks. Listen, protest unfair things.

Teresa: Fight the power, y'all.

Travis: I believe in you. You're great. And if you get arrested, call me. I don't know what I can do about it from here, but I'll tell you I'm proud of you.

Teresa: So then, also make sure parents, kids, that you guys are on the same page as to what the itinerary is. Maybe be a little lax about the curfew, because it's a dance, it's a late night. Maybe people wanna go out to like Steak and Shake afterwards or whatever.

Travis: You're so cute. I love that that's your like, they're gonna, oh, let them be a little naughty. They might go to Steak and Shake. You're sweet and I love you.

Teresa: Also, if you're going to a dance, make sure that you have a kind of, I would say like a check-in group. If you don't wanna dance with a specific person, you can always say like, hey, I need to meet my friend over there or just a no thank you. But if you need a code word for your friends to be able to assist you in extraditing yourself from the situation, I think that's a great idea to have as well.

Travis: Listen, especially in big crowded gymnasiums or bars or clubs or wherever, having a co-pilot is always a good call. Also, same, if you like get a ride with people or you're like carpooling, making sure you have like a clear plan of like when we're ready to leave, make sure we do this or whatever because like you don't want to find out like, oh, they took off? They were my ride home.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Oh no.

Teresa: So have fun and be safe.

Travis: Listen, I will also say we talk about this a lot of holidays and stuff, but I don't know if you guys know this, Teresa and I are parents now. Don't drink and drive at these things. You know, we talk about carpooling and parties and everything. And listen, I know every single person listening to this is like, but I am in high school. What do you mean, sir? You know, right. Be cool, be safe.

Teresa: This goes for the alumni too. You know, you make sure that you follow all of the rules as far as drinking on school property goes. Maybe it's allowed at certain events and maybe it isn't, and make sure that you follow those rules too.

Travis: Yes. Be good or be good at it. One of those two.

Teresa: All right.

Travis: All right. Hey, everybody, thank you so much. We want to say thank you to our researcher, Alexx, without whom we could not make the show. Thank you to our editor, Rachel, without whom we could not make the show. Thank you to you for listening. We can make the show without you, but that would be like having a football game with empty stands.

Teresa: Aw.

Travis: Aw. Then what? You just win? Who cares?

Teresa: Who cares?

Travis: 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.

As always, we are taking your topic submissions, your questions, your queries, your idioms, and I would like your romance novel

recommendations. Send those to shmannerscast@gmail.com, and make sure that you say hi to Alexx, 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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