

Shmanners 480: Idioms Part 19

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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: Fine, how are you?

Travis: Good. I'm almost 42.

Teresa: [gasps] So close.

Travis: I know. Saturday, I'll be 42. The best age to be.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Everyone agrees.

Teresa: 'Cause isn't that the answer to the universe?

Travis: But it's also old enough to know better but still too young to care.

Teresa: Ohh.

Travis: Ehh, ehh. Not like 43, where I'm not young enough, and I have to care... then. At 43.

Teresa: Wow. Your time is very limited, then.

Travis: I know! I got one year to do dumb stuff!

Teresa: [laughs] Just one.

Travis: Yeah, I haven't done any dumb stuff up till now. Ugh. I gotta really step it up. Time for, uh, hang gliding over sharks... who are hang gliding a little bit lower than me.

Teresa: Yes, perfect.

Travis: That's what we're talking about this week, right? Shark—

Teresa: No.

Travis: —shark gliding?

Teresa: No.

Travis: No?

Teresa: Mm-mm. We have another idioms!

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: We love the idioms episodes.

Travis: We do. We're real idioms idiots over here.

Teresa: You know, I don't think that I paid too much attention to idioms until we had kids. Because I just took for granted that the things that I said made sense to everyone.

Travis: Well, that's kind of the thing about idioms, isn't it?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Right? You're just so used to using 'em that you don't really think about—especially when it comes to, uh, what, like, implicit meanings—you know what I mean?

Teresa: Yeah, yeah.

Travis: There's a word for that that I'm not—connotation. Right? Where you use it, and then they use it wrong.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: But somewhat right. And you're like, "Well, sort of. But... "

Teresa: Or they look at you and they're like, "That's not... what is that? What is that?"

And you're like...

Travis: You're like, "You know what? Don't worry about it."

Teresa: "Um... "

Travis: "Get ready for school."

Teresa: "I don't know how to explain it to you." But thanks to Alexx, our writer and researcher, who compiled these wonderful idioms from you fanners, we do know how to explain them.

Travis: And we will!

Teresa: And we will. If you would like to submit one, you can always send your idiom to shmannerstcast@gmail.com, and we are always taking them, filing them away. So if—

Travis: Storing them in our little brains.

Teresa: No, in the computer.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: It's much better that way.

Travis: Oh, okay, yeah. That's—yeah, that's better.

Teresa: So if you don't hear your idiom right away, fear not! Because they—we have compiled... a pile? [laughs]

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: I guess. Of idioms.

Travis: This is idioms episode 19!

Teresa: I know, right?

Travis: Wild.

Teresa: Okay. So, um, let's get into it. Here's one, submitted by Oran H. The phrase is, "Right hand man." Or woman, or person.

Travis: [simultaneously] We're gonna need a right—yeah.

Teresa: "We're gonna need a right hand man."

Travis: He's gonna need his right hand man.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: We are out... gunned.

Teresa: Outmanned.

Travis: Outsorted. Out, um, bulletted. All of 'em.

Teresa: All of 'em.

Travis: Um, so this... this... the connotation of this is, like, not only do they, like, rely on this person but, like, they're indispensable. This is the person that when they need something, they are there, right? They're the one that they turn to. And I assume that the meaning of this comes from, like, especially during a time where left-handed was seen as, you know, weird, that it was like, my right hand. Like, "I need my right hand to do things. How could I do things without my right hand? So, this person is as useful to me as my own right hand."

Teresa: Yes. It's true. Um, and the trusted helper, you could say, is your rotten soldier, your good time boy.

Travis: Indeed. I mean, you could say that, but should one?

Teresa: I mean, especially rotten soldier. Because...

Travis: Yeah, I don't know if someone said, "They're my right hand man, my rotten soldier." I'd be like...

Teresa: "My good time boy."

Travis: "Um... what was that middle one again, Todd? Say that one more time?"

Teresa: Well—well, as—I mean, it's Laszlo talking about...

Travis: I know that.

Teresa: ... Johnny Boy.

Travis: I know that.

Teresa: Anyway, anyway. Um, so it's based on the cultural idea, like you said, that most people are right-handed, and in war, your stronger soldier would go to your right side. If you were leading the battle, you would have,

um—the person in command of the right side of the cavalry unit was considered stronger, more important, um, and...

Travis: Bad news for the other one, huh? When you're like, "Yeah, if you could just scoot over. No, little to the left. Little to the left! Uh, okay. [hushed] Now, Derek, you come up here with me. [louder] Ohh, my good boy! Oh, Derek! What would I do with—no. If you could go a little more to the left? Liiittle more?"

Teresa: It's more about how the right hand side was the cavalry unit. That's the horsed soldiers.

Travis: Oh, okay. The be-horsed ones.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Now, I also know that there is some biblical stuff with this, right? Talking about sitting at the right hand of the Lord, right?

Teresa: I'm sure, yeah. I have heard that.

Travis: So that—I mean, that's in there, too.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: So, you sit at the right hand of the Lord. The next one... this is from John H.

Teresa: And one of your favorites.

Travis: "Dog who caught the car." A little—yeah, I wouldn't say it's my favorite—

Teresa: No, you say that a lot. You say it a lot.

Travis: A little bit. Little bit. So, this is like... the idea is, if a dog's chasing a car, right?

Teresa: Which, they like to chase things.

Travis: If it were to catch the car, what does it do now? You know? It's like, you did not think through this plan. You did not have a step two.

Teresa: Exactly. You were having so much fun committing to what you were doing that you didn't think about, now what? Right?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Because we all know that—

Travis: I think this is mostly, if you ever hear me quote it, it's almost entirely because of Heath Ledger in *The Dark Knight Rises*.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Of "[Heath Ledger's Joker impression] I'm just a dog chasing cars."

Teresa: [laughs] Um, but also, right? It's... when you put a car against a dog, the odds that the dog is actually gonna catch the car are also pretty slim, right?

Travis: Well, that's—I think that's the...

Teresa: That's part of it.

Travis: That's the implied part, right? Of, like, you were so focused on this unattainable goal that you did not think about what you would do once you actually attained it.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Right? So if someone said, "My goal is to earn a billion dollars," and then they get a billion dollars, and it's like, "Okay, now what?" And, like, "I actually didn't think I'd ever get here."

Like, you might say this with someone who their whole focus is to win the lottery.

Teresa: Oh, yeah, yeah. That definitely makes sense.

Travis: Not, like, "I want to win the lottery so that I can... "

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Right? This is—we talk about this. There's a little bit of this in—when I went to acting school, in fame school. Where we talk about when you're doing—like, your intentions in a scene. You need to have active—you can't just say, like, "To be funny."

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Like, what does that mean? You have to have a goal attached to it like "To make them laugh." Right? So an—

Teresa: Exactly, an action.

Travis: Now, it's like, if you achieve that, what's the next thing, right? Yes.

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. And then you go into super-objectives and all this kind of stuff. Acting school is fun, you guys. You should go.

Travis: It's great.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And if you go to acting school, you're guaranteed to become famous. Look at me!

Teresa: [laughs] Okay, this one is from Tyson G. "Spearheaded" is the idiom.

Travis: That's a idiom? That's a idiom?

Teresa: Well, because it is—it's used as...

Travis: No, it makes complete sense.

Teresa: Not as quite a metaphor, right?

Travis: I'm not questioning it so much as it's like, I wouldn't have even thought—like, 'cause that just...

Teresa: It's not a saying, but it is something...

Travis: But it's so commonly used, right? That it's just like, "You know. When you spearhead something."

Teresa: Yeah. It means that you are leading or being the main point of contact for something, right? You are kind of, um, I would say not the figurehead, right? Although you are in charge. But you have action behind that.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And that is because in the military, the leader of a battle, AKA the person who guides everyone else's spears toward their enemies, is thought of the head of the squadron, right? So you...

Travis: A lot of military ones.

Teresa: A lot of military ones this time.

Travis: I guess if I'm picturing—if we change it to a dog—

Teresa: War is big business.

Travis: —a dog chasing a tank, now it's all military.

Teresa: I guess so..

Travis: But that makes sense because, like, you've mentioned figurehead, and I've never thought about, like, comparing those two. But, like, a figurehead is more of, like, the face of the thing, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Where it's like, oh, yeah, when everybody thinks about this, they think about this. And the spearhead is more like, "I'm guiding the whole thing, right?"

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: "I'm the one powering the thing we're doing. Yeah, everybody's looking at that guy, but I'm the one, like, doing the work to make sure it's happening."

Teresa: Right. That's what differentiates the two.

Travis: And figurehead is, like, the prow of a ship, right? When they put that decorative thing. I mean, as long as it—

Teresa: That doesn't actually do anything.

Travis: But as long as we're talking about spearheading, we should explain what figurehead is, too.

Teresa: Of course.

Travis: People might not know. When you get that pretty mermaid on the front or, like, a galloping horse or something, you know, and it's just a carved sculpture that provides no, like, benefit to the ship, except it's pretty.

Teresa: Looks nice.

Travis: It's nice to look at.

Teresa: [laughs] That's right. Uh, do you want to do the next one?

Travis: Sure, I'll do the next one. The next one is from Darren M. "The proof is in the pudding."

Teresa: Ah, we heard this one last night in our Bake Off watchings.

Travis: So this, to me, without looking at Alexx's explanation, I think that this is, like, "Well, we'll know when it's done," right? So, like, you might say, like, you know, "I think this is a good recipe," to take it a little literally.

And you would say, "Well, the proof is in the pudding." Right? Like, we can't judge it right now. How it turns out will show us if it was right or not.

Teresa: That is exactly it. And so, although this has been part of our English lexicon since the early 1900s, the idiom is actually a full phrase. "The proof of the pudding is in the eating."

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: Which makes it, like—which really explains it.

Travis: [simultaneously] That makes a lot more sense.

Teresa: Right?

Travis: That makes a lot more sense than "The proof is in the pudding," which makes it sound like a strange, like, uh—like, what is it? The—

Teresa: Like you've hidden a file inside the cake.

Travis: Yeah, like there's a secret in there!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: National Treasure was what I was trying to think of, maybe. Where it's like, "I found Ben Franklin's pipe in the pudding." But I—also, there was a part of me that always wondered if it had something to do with—because usually, especially if you're talking about, like, Christmas puddings, there's, like, alcohol in 'em.

Teresa: Yes, and we are talking about Christmas puddings.

Travis: Well, there's, like, alcohol in 'em.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: So, like, proof. You would talk about, like, the proof of an alcohol. And so, like, there's a part of me that—

Teresa: No.

Travis: —when it was—before I knew it was a full phrase, that "The proof is in the pudding" is like, "We won't know how strong the alcohol is until we eat it." But also, you light it on fire, which is fun.

Teresa: That is fun. But—so, we're talking about the British pudding, right? And you mentioned Christmas pudding, which isn't very sweet. It's kind of savory. It's got, like, fruits, and cinnamon, and nutmeg, and cloves, and all that kind of stuff in it, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Um, and so it's like, seasoned oatmeal and mincemeat. But what they do is you stuff it into a bag or a skin and you boil it. Right?

Travis: And it also—Christmas puddings I know for sure, I don't know about the other ones. But sometimes, like, you're supposed to let them sit for a really long time.

Teresa: Yes, exactly.

Travis: Which is another reason I always connected, like—it made sense to me because you're like, "Well, we finished this step. And now we'll have no idea. We have to wait a really long time before we try it. So we have no way of knowing right now if it's good or not, and we just kind of have to hope, after this very long wait, that it will be good."

Teresa: Exactly. That's exactly right.

Travis: Did I nail it?

Teresa: Yeah. Yeah.

Travis: Man, I'm smart, and I don't know what those teachers in middle school were thinking when they said I wasn't. I've told the story before of when I got my National Merit Scholarship, and in my high school class, in the senior class, there were five National Merit Scholars. And one of the parents of one of them, who was also, like, the choral director of a lot of the children's theater shows I was in—and, like, so she knew me, right? We had worked together on shows and everything. And when I was one of the five she said, "I had no idea you were smart."

Now, she probably didn't say it in that tone, but that's how I hear it now in my head.

Teresa: [laughs] "Thanks... "

Travis: And listen, I get it. I worked very hard. I worked hard to make stupid things happen so that people wouldn't know I was very smart.

Teresa: So, here's one from Wayne B. "Burning the midnight oil."

Travis: Okay. Well, this is, like... maybe very specific kind of example but, like, staying up late to work on a project.

Teresa: Yes. Exactly.

Travis: Of, like, "They were supposed to go home two hours ago. Yeah, they're really burning the midnight oil."

Teresa: Mm-hmm. And this comes from... the first known use of the phrase is in the book Emblems by the poet Francis Quarles. In 1635, he wrote—

Travis: That's a long time ago!

Teresa: It is a long time ago. He wrote—

Travis: That's almost 500 years ago. No, it's almost 400. Oh, man.

Teresa: Can't do math.

Travis: I'm not that smart. [wheezes]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: See? This is how I keep people on their toes.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: "Can Travis do math? I don't know. Is he a National Merit Scholar? Yes."

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: "How does that work out? No idea." I'm ziggin' and zaggin' over here!

Teresa: Okay. He wrote, "We spend our midday sweat or midnight oil. We tire the night in thought, the day in toil."

Travis: Oh! Okay. This is interesting. This is another, like, I haven't thought about it as a juxtaposition. Right? But saying you have your midday sweat, right? You're out working and doing the stuff in the sun and sweating. And then the midnight oil is burning without the light, right? This is, like, a full day's work, the midday sweat and the midnight oil as two different kind of, like, examples of exertion and exhaustion.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Interesting.

Teresa: Very good. Um, I mean, and I think that, like, it also makes sense quite, like, physically, right? Because oil is like the lamp oil that you would need to see at night. You would use the lamps.

Travis: Sure. But that could be 8 PM oil after Daylight Savings, you know? It gets dark.

Teresa: [laughs] It does get real dark, real fast.

Travis: Hey, have you guys noticed? What's the deal with Daylight Savings?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: It's funny because they're not exactly the same, but I would kind of put them in the same, like, file folder of idioms. Like, burning the candle at both ends.

Teresa: Okay, yeah.

Travis: Right? Of, like, burning the midnight oil is, like, a step before burning the candle at both ends. Of, like, "Hey. You were here late yesterday, burning the midnight oil. That's great. But you've been here late for the last, like, four nights, and I'm worried you're burning the candle at both ends."

Teresa: That—yeah. It's, like, a step too far. 'Cause you're gonna—'cause if you burn the candle at both ends, you're gonna run out of candle.

Travis: You're gonna run out of candle. And it's about, like, using human will and human endurance as fuel, right? Talking about it in fuel, you know? And it's just interesting that, you know, we talked about, like, the military has a lot of impact, but we also are like fuel, you know?

Teresa: Mm-hmm. Gotta have it.

Travis: Just think about it. And while you think about it, how about a word from another Max Fun show?

[theme music plays]

Travis: We're back!

Teresa: We're back. Here's another one from Wayne B.

Travis: Wayne B!

Teresa: "You can't have your cake and eat it too." And that also reminds me of Bake Off last night.

Travis: That's...

Teresa: I don't think they said that, but...

Travis: No, but there was lots of—

Teresa: [simultaneously] Like they did say "Proof in the pudding."

Travis: There was lots of having cake, and then you eat it. This you might say of, like, you kind of have to choose one. But the implication is, like, by choosing one, the other option goes away.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Right? Because I hear this as, like, yes, that's a beautiful cake. And we could sit and look at it and appreciate how beautiful it is, or we could eat it and appreciate how delicious it is, but we can't do both of those things, 'cause once you eat it, the cake is gone.

Teresa: Right. You can't appreciate what it looks like anymore. And I think that that is the thing—

Travis: Another way—you might say "You can't have it both ways."

Teresa: Yes, yes.

Travis: Of like, you want both of these things to be true. Like, for example, if your friend was interested in a guy but didn't want to date him, but also didn't want anyone else to date him, you would be like, "Listen, man. You can't have your cake and eat it too. Right? Either you can date him, or someone else can date him, but you got—like, it's one of those two, man."

Teresa: And the confusing part about this is that people don't... in our language now, don't understand what "have" meant. It doesn't mean, like, get handed a slice of cake or eat a piece of cake, right? It doesn't mean, like, "Have one on my plate, or eat it." Even though that does still kind of make sense, because once you eat it, it's not on your plate anymore. It is—it comes from 1538, when it was first used in a letter.

Travis: That's almost 500 years ago! That one's right.

Teresa: Did it.

Travis: Yeah, that one I nailed it. Took me a second longer to double check my facts and figures.

Teresa: The Duke of Norfolk to Thomas Cromwell. The Duke wrote plainly to the controversial British figure that, quote, "A man cannot have his cake and eat his cake." And in Britain, the phrase usually means—

Travis: It's better now. There was too many his-es in there. "A man cannot have his cake and eat his cake. Hiss, hiss, hiss. I'm a snake." Do you think that the Duke of Norfolk was a snake? Do we have any...

Teresa: No. He was not.

Travis: Can you prove it?

Teresa: I can't, except he did write, and snakes can't hold...

Travis: Lotta change—

Teresa: ... pens.

Travis: A lot of things can change in 500 years. Some snakes have little fingers.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: They have little fingers.

Teresa: Um—

Travis: He could write with his tongue! He dipped his tongue in the ink and then "Ahh, ahh. Hiss, hiss, hiss, hiss."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Or his tail! He's got a little tail! I think I've seen it in the King Arthur—or, no. In Robin Hood, from Disney right? Doesn't the little snake—I think the little snake writes with his tail.

Teresa: No, I think he still writes with a quill. He holds it with his tail, though.

Travis: So, you've proven my point!

Teresa: [laughs] A cartoon.

Travis: You heard it here first. Big reveal.

Teresa: That's a cartoon.

Travis: The Duke of Norfolk was a snake.

Teresa: There are other cultures other than the English culture that have very similar idioms to this. The German proverb "You cannot dance at two weddings at the same time."

Travis: That's great. And, like, a very, like, old school, like, Flintstones, like, "I'm gonna try—" I think... I think there was a Boy Meets World episode

where Cory tried to do this. Go to two birthday parties at the same time. But that idea of, like, "I'm running back and forth across town to do this."

Also the Katherine Heigl movie *27 Dresses*, I think she does this. There's a lot of examples of people trying to make those plans work, to hilarious ends.

Teresa: I like when they do it with a clone. Some scientist man wants to be in two places at once and he makes a clone of himself and his clone is, like, stupider than him.

Travis: That's a crime against god and nature. How dare you make light of that?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Do you know how much clone fraud there is in the world today?!

Teresa: None. I don't think that there's any.

Travis: Exactly. Because of people like me! Spearheading the campaign against it. And then there's an Albania saying, similarly, "You cannot take a swim and not get wet."

Travis: Once again, very clear.

Teresa: Very clear. I've tried to explain this to our children several times. Not the idiom of eating cake, but the idea that—

Travis: No, 'cause then they just think about cake.

Teresa: Right. They often have a lot of plans for a very finite amount of time. They have lots of things that they want to do, but they don't understand that time keeps moving. So if we choose to do one thing, that doesn't mean that we're gonna have time for the other thing as well, because sometimes you have to choose how you spend your time.

Travis: Yeah. Kind of the underlying aspect of this, and I think the reason I like cake as the example—and granted, it's also biased because I've grown

up hearing it—but it does kind of imply a little bit of, like, luxury. A little bit of, like, um, you know, I'm not saying, like, you can't have basic human rights and healthcare and whatever too, right? I'm saying, like, cake. Right? Because the thing that I have tried to—we have tried to instill in our children is the fact that you want to do both doesn't make it possible.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Yes, both of these things would be fun. Both of these things would be great. But we can only do one. And what you don't want to do is worry so much that you chose the wrong one that it impacts your ability to enjoy the one you did choose. Right? And so it's a lot about, like, "Listen, man. Yeah, it's—either one, look how beautiful it is. That's great. Eat it. That's great. But you gotta choose, and then not worry about it."

Teresa: Exactly. Um, let's go over some very good nonsense phrases that people sent in.

Travis: Like blibble blobble?

Teresa: No.

Travis: Wibbledy wobbledy?

Teresa: No, no, no. Here's an example. This is from Sarah A. "My mom is from the UK, and whenever she's talking about two different things, she says they're like chalk and cheese to highlight how different one thing is from another. Did she make this up? She's the only person I've ever heard say this."

Travis: Can I just say, way better than apples and oranges.

Teresa: I know, right? 'Cause those are fruits.

Travis: They're both fruits.

Teresa: And they're both, like, round.

Travis: They're both round. They're both juicy. They both have vitamins. They're both primary colors. I'm—no, orange isn't a pri—anyways, you get it.

Teresa: I get it.

Travis: Of, like, unless you're saying comparing apples to oranges is finding some basic, deep, inherent differences, right? Are you saying red and orange, that's the only difference? No, come on. But chalk and cheese.

Teresa: Chalk and cheese makes a lot of sense.

Travis: If someone said "Here's some cheese," and handed me chalk, I would be outraged.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: If someone said "Here's some apple," and handed me orange, I'd be confused.

Teresa: Hmm.

Travis: I would be worried that they don't know the difference.

Teresa: You can still eat it, though.

Travis: Like, how old are you? Do you know the difference between—have you encountered these two fruits before? But chalk and cheese? This is a prank. I'm being punked.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Is that real?

Teresa: It is! It is real. A maybe lesser-known British idiom, but we don't live there, so maybe lots of people say it.

Travis: And I'm not gonna do it, 'cause I'm bad at accents and I think no matter what accent I do, it comes out offensive to the people hearing it and the people who use it. But it sounds, in my head, way fun if you say it in the right accent. Chalk and cheese. It's fun to say in, like, a Cockney kind of slang, in my head. Once again, I won't do it, because I sound like a middle schooler in their first play, and it's Oliver, and I don't know what I'm doing.

Teresa: [laughs] And you went to acting school.

Travis: I did! But you know what I did do well in acting school? Accents and voices.

Teresa: Alright. It's an old expression that was first cited in 1390. Very old.

Travis: That's almost... hold on... phew. Give me a second. 700—no.

Teresa: Why do we keep—

Travis: 650 years ago!

Teresa: Why do we keep doing that?

Travis: Rule of eights? The eighth time you make a joke it's hilarious. That's what I've found.

Teresa: That's, like, the rule of Travis. Always making—

Travis: How dare you.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Do you mean it like I never give up on a joke and eventually it's funny? Yes. 'Cause I'm tenacious. Like a dog chasing a car.

Teresa: Yep. Um, Mary S. writes, "If someone is doing something unrealistic, my aunt will say that person is chasing rainbows. I've heard the Adele song Chasing Pavements, but I've never heard of chasing rainbows."

Travis: Chasing waterfalls.

Teresa: "Is this a thing?"

Travis: Chasing waterfalls.

Teresa: Yep, that's another one.

Travis: I'll tell you what's good about chasing waterfalls that I like. There's a drop at the end.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Right? The implication being like, "Yeah, you got to the edge of the waterfall and you fell over." Right? There's a danger to chasing waterfalls. Right? You stick to rivers and lakes? Flat, even. Easy to swim around. Waterfall? There's danger at the end. Rainbow? There's skittles at the end, I think.

Teresa: Um, well, this probably comes from the Irish folktale of leprechauns leaving pots of gold at the end of rainbows. Um, but a rainbow doesn't technically end. It's light refracted. And also, if you look at a rainbow from space, you'll see it's a circle.

Travis: All around the planet?

Teresa: No. Just in—just in that area, right? And it's just interrupted in your sight line by the horizon.

Travis: So you're saying Earth is round?!

Teresa: Indeed.

Travis: [loud gasp] She's discovered it, folks! She's done it! Proof!

Teresa: So then if you're chasing a rainbow, or the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, then you're in for a rude awakening, because there is none. There's no end to the rainbow, no pot of gold.

Travis: You should just stop and taste the rainbow.

Teresa: On a different note, chasing pavements is something that Adele talks about. And she wrote the song about leaving a bad relationship and just sort of wandering around going nowhere but where the sidewalk took her next.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: So that's not—I mean, it's not really an idiom. But she did—it is about her, like, kind of just leaving without any trajectory.

Travis: I think it's important—like, once again, we talk about the connotations and implications, right? And there's three examples. Chasing rainbows, chasing pavement, chasing waterfalls. Of the chasing part isn't the important part of that saying.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: It's what they're chasing, right? You know? So you gotta think about the implications of, like, what would it really mean if I was chasing a rainbow? What would it really mean if I was chasing pavement? What would it really mean if I was chasing waterfalls? I've said chasing too many times and it's lost all meaning to me.

Teresa: Here's something that will change your mind about meaning.

Travis: Go on?

Teresa: [laughs] Taj S. writes, "No need to dig into this, just wanted to share. My friend is an exchange student from Australia, and my favorite thing that I ever heard her say that she was going to 'Go off like a frog in a sock' at a party."

Travis: Huh!

Teresa: "I asked her what it meant. She told me it's a phrase for freaking out. Whether you're about to go off on someone you're mad at, or you're so excited that you can barely sit still. Pretty much, like, flailing around, just making noise, having a lot of energy and moving a lot." But, you know, not really, like, actually, like, going somewhere. 'Cause, like, a frog in a sock can't really... go anywhere.

Travis: So kind of almost impotent rage.

Teresa: Yeah. More like bottled up energy.

Travis: Ahh. Okay.

Teresa: I think.

Travis: I was trying to figure out why the specificity of the sock as opposed to, like, I don't know, a frog in boiling water, or a frog in a box. You know what I mean? Sock? Maybe it's just 'cause it's fun and evocative.

Teresa: Go off like a frog in a sock. It's got a—

Travis: It's fun, yeah.

Teresa: It's got a lot of, like, assonance to it. That's the—that's the vowel repetition, right?

Travis: Correct.

Teresa: Yeah. So I think that that's nice.

Travis: Frog in a—go off like a frog in a sock. It's also has a good rhythm. A lot of, uh, monosyllabic. That's great.

Teresa: It is great.

Travis: I love that one. I think I'm gonna start using that one.

Teresa: Okay. Enjoy Australia.

Travis: Have we talked about the... there's a couple Appalachian ones that I really like. Finer than frog hair split four ways.

Teresa: Oh yeah, you've talked about that one.

Travis: Have I talked about long-tailed cat in a room full of rocking chairs?

Teresa: Mmm... no. I don't think so.

Travis: To describe someone being anxious. Like, if you were, like—

Teresa: Okay, that makes sense.

Travis: Like if you saw somebody and it was like, they very clearly are worried about something but don't want to tell people what they're worried about. Or they're, like—because the implication, right? Is, like, you're being very careful where you move, being very careful what you do. And, like, you seem as nervous as a long-haired cat in a room full of rocking chairs. Right? Like, you're being very careful how you maneuver through this situation. Why are you so nervous? What are you hiding?

Teresa: Why is that so long? That doesn't seem very succinct.

Travis: Well, Appalachian ones are rarely succinct. Because the idea is like, "I'm old and you're gonna sit and listen to me," right?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: These aren't clever and quick. These are, like, "Slow down and listen to the wisdom of this old lady sitting on a porch as they yell out." Right? Like, that's—there's a lot more flowery language associated with it.

Teresa: Hmm.

Travis: Of, like, that's why a lot of, like, Appalachian slang is like, we took one word and then we made a three word slang about it, right?

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: "We do things a little differently here," that kind of idea.

Teresa: Well, my grandmother was German Appalachian. And she used to talk about "the pot" a lot.

Travis: Sorry?

Teresa: "Things are going to pot."

Travis: Ah, yes. Okay.

Teresa: "Pee or get off the pot."

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: She used to talk about that. That's the chamberpot.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: That—it talks a lot about poop. [laughs]

Travis: Yes, this is true. It's fun. We have a lot of fun, here. Hey, everybody! Thank you so much for listening to another idioms episode. A couple announcements. One: we're doing Candenights live in Huntington again. The live show is going to be December 6th. But then, we are also going to film it and release it as a VOD, a video on-demand, for those of you who don't know.

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: On December 19th. You can get in-person tickets, which include the virtual ticket, or a separate virtual ticket, by going to bit.ly/candenights2025. We are right now running an audience survey, and if you could take a minute or two or three to fill it out, it would be helpful for us. Link is in the episode description. Take that survey. We also have some

new merch over in the merch story. Check out mcelroymerch.com. Including a Death Blart poster by Jack T. Sherry, which I think is peak.

Teresa: It's super cute.

Travis: It's very good. We also have a 2025 Candlenights poster and Candlenights—

Teresa: Also cute.

Travis: Thank you. Candlenights ornament by Scott Hoch. And 10% of all merch proceeds this month will be donated to Native American Aid, which addresses immediate needs for tribes experiencing disaster, emergency food shortages, and preventative healthcare needs.

Also, Champions Grove packages are on sale now. They're going very quickly. When last I checked, we were well over halfway sold, and it's only been a couple days. So go to www.championsgrove.com to get all the information there. It's a yearly gaming event that I run and that I, uh, co-founded with my co-founder, Alice. And it's at Ravenwood Castle in Hocking Hills, Ohio, where we get people together, we bring in some talented game hosts to run some games. Um, it's a super fun weekend. Check it out. Www.championsgrove.com.

Thank you to Alexx, our researcher, without whom we could not do this episode.

Teresa: Thank you.

Travis: Thank you to Rachel, our editor, without whom we could not do this episode.

Teresa: [simultaneously] Thank you.

Travis: And thank you to you, for listening. We couldn't do this episode without you, because you submit, uh, the idioms, so thank you so much.

Teresa: [simultaneously] That's right, those idioms are from you guys.

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.

And, like we said, we're always taking topic submissions, and questions, and idioms, and please send all of those to shmannerscast@gmail.com, and say hi to Alexx, because she reads every 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]

[chord]

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