

## Shmanners 485: Ugly Sweater Parties

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["Shmanners Theme" by brentalfloss 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. [chuckles]

**Travis:** For ordinary occasions. Hello, my dove. Weren't expecting that, were you?

**Teresa:** [chuckles] No, I wasn't. I weren't.

**Travis:** Gotcha.

**Teresa:** I weren't expecting it.

**Travis:** Gotcha. I wasn't expecting it either. Sometimes, I open my mouth—

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** And weird energy comes out.

**Teresa:** That's okay.

**Travis:** And that's what it was!

**Teresa:** Yeah. You know, sometimes weird is good.

**Travis:** Thank you. That's what it says on the McElroy family crest.

**Teresa:** [laughs] Doesn't it say something else?

**Travis:** It says, "Touch not this cat."

**Teresa:** [chuckles] Oh, yeah.

**Travis:** But, I mean, if you—if it's the Scottish origin of McElroy, which is MacGillivray, then yes. I don't know what—this is the thing—agh! Okay.

**Teresa:** Agh! [laughs]

**Travis:** Our kids did spirit week, and they were—and one of 'em was heritage day, of like where—I don't know. And they were like, "Where are we from?" And I want to be like, "West Virginia."

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** I don't know. And so, we went Scotch-Irish. But the answer is like McElroy is not a trace—like, there's a lot of different things McElroy could have come from. And I'm sure that if I ever decided to give up my DNA to, you know, whatever database is tracking those, then I could maybe trace it back. I don't know, man.

**Teresa:** I think Justin did that? You should ask him. He's pretty—it's pretty close, I'm sure. Yeah, they did, I think they did like a 23andMe.

**Travis:** He gave up our DNA?

**Teresa:** He did, yeah. He and Sydnee both did.

**Travis:** *Ugh.*

**Teresa:** For podcast.

**Travis:** Oh, okay, that's fair. If it's for content, I get it!

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** So that's what we're talking about this week?

**Teresa:** Content?

**Travis:** Podcasts?

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** Oh.

**Teresa:** Sweaters!

**Travis:** Sweaters?

**Teresa:** Ugly sweater parties.

**Travis:** Or as our British friends might call them, sweeters.

**Teresa:** No, they call them vests.

**Travis:** Jumpers.

**Teresa:** Oh? Vests—

**Travis:** Vest is an undershirt.

**Teresa:** Is it?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Is it?

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** It's not just a sleeveless sweater?

**Travis:** No. Well, that is—I think it's still a vest. But if they say like vest and pants, that's like your undershirt and underwear.

**Teresa:** Hm...

**Travis:** And a jumper is your like sweater.

**Teresa:** Hm...

**Travis:** Your trousers, slacks, are your pants.

**Teresa:** Will you do a Google? Just to make sure.

**Travis:** Google.

**Teresa:** Do a Google.

**Travis:** You want me to Google "vest in England?"

**Teresa:** [chuckles] What does vest mean in England? Okay, so, while you're doing a Google, I am going to tell us about... ugly sweater parties. Now, you may have been invited to an ugly sweater—

**Travis:** In England—

**Teresa:** Oh?

**Travis:** UK, a vest means a sleeveless undershirt or undergarment worn under other clothes, typically for warmth or as a base layer. While an America vest is called a wescot, or waist coat in the UK. Boom.

**Teresa:** Boom. Got it. Good job. Thanks, man.

**Travis:** Don't come for me, my family's from Scotland, or Ireland or UK, or Europe or somewhere.

**Teresa:** [chuckles] My family's from Germany, but not from Bavaria. So, there's not—we don't like do the... drindles.

**Travis:** Lederhosen?

**Teresa:** Yeah, stuff like that.

**Travis:** What are we even talking about?

**Teresa:** [chuckles] Anyway. Ugly sweaters, that's what we're talking about. All right, so, I like the idea that it's called an ugly sweater, but I don't think that they're ugly.

**Travis:** Well, I'll tell you the problem. I think that there's two different kinds, right? When we're talking about ugly sweaters. There's sweaters that were not intended to be worn to these parties, but rather either through like hindsight—like these are retro sweaters, you know, that are no longer in fashion. Or it's like somebody was taking a big swing and it didn't work out, right? Or there's like novelty sweaters.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** And the problem with novelty sweaters, they're not normally made of the highest material.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** So like, for Candlenights shows, I used to get novelty sweaters for our live shows, and they were wildly uncomfortable!

**Teresa:** Yeah. Yeah, we'll talk a little bit about that. So, Christmas themed, Christmas, winter, holiday themed sweaters, even some long sleeve shirts could be included, I suppose, that would be considered tacky or gaudy due to embellishments and/or holiday themed messaging, right? So, maybe you have in your family someone who wears a sweater that has so much tinsel on it, right? It looks like a Christmas tree.

**Travis:** Or like jingle bells, that when they move around, makes a lot of noise, or it lights up.

**Teresa:** Yeah, lights up, that's a good one. My mom had one that lit up.

**Travis:** Or it has references to National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation.

**Teresa:** Sure, yes. And so, we need to go back to the origin of the American sweater craze, the 1950s.

**Travis:** I'm gonna—I'm gonna theorize something even further back.

**Teresa:** Okay?

**Travis:** I think that you could trace roots to this back to when people used to dress up in like more of a carnival manner for Christmas, and do like clowning and gestures and stuff like that. To set up this idea of like clowning and making a fool of oneself at Christmas.

**Teresa:** Maybe. But we're gonna start in the 1950s.

**Travis:** Okay. I just wanted to throw that out to seem, I don't know, smart, educated, you know.

**Teresa:** Okay, yeah, yeah! A lot of people would throw this back to the '80s, but the '80s actually did the '50s, in their kind of like retro nostalgia. So, that's why we're at the '50s.

**Travis:** Just as upsettingly now, kids look more and more like characters from Dawson's Creek.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm. So, what happens is, Christmas sweaters became an American staple during the post-war era, because hand-knit sweaters were treasured not only for their decoration, but their warmth, okay? So we're talking about the war effort, right? Long before America joined the World War II war effort, right? With the inclusion of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. They were asked to send, quote, "Bundles for Britain," consisting of food and also handmade scarves, hats and mittens to be sent as care packages to the front lines.

**Travis:** Well, I think that it goes back to, you know, like the handmade sweater, the handmade whatever, knit goods—

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** Being like a very—like a long-distance hug.

**Teresa:** Oh, sure, yeah.

**Travis:** Do you know what I mean? Of like, "I made this for you to keep you warm." You wrap it around yourself, right? And this idea of especially being far from home and having a sweater that, you know, was made for you with love being like, "Not only do I wear this and stay warm, but it reminds me that someone cares about me."

**Teresa:** Mm-hm, yeah, I get that. In Time Magazine, July of 1940, there was a quote that said, [spoofing and old-timey voice] "The men hardly have time to grab their guns before the wives and sweethearts grab their needles and yarn."

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Did you like that 1940s voice?

**Travis:** I did. [spoofing and old-timey voice] "Breaking! Our boys on the front!"

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** "Around the globe!" [spoofs morse code sounds]

**Teresa:** And one of the greatest champions of this fiber revolution was Eleanor Roosevelt, who was frequently photographed knitting for the war effort, and even carrying around her enormous bag of yarn and needles.

**Travis:** And secrets.

**Teresa:** Probably.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** She was affectionately named the First Knitter of the land.

**Travis:** Oh, okay.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** I get it.

**Teresa:** I think that's fun. So, even though the war ended eventually, now that people came back and we didn't have to ration anymore, sweaters became even more outlandish and crazy and embellished, especially around Christmas time.

**Travis:** Well, I also have to imagine, if you go back and watch Christmas specials from that era, from the '50s—like sweaters, of course, it's winter in America, right? So there's sweaters. But there was also this trend that always tickles me, where it was like these cool crooner dudes.

**Teresa:** Yes!

**Travis:** Where was like they were usually in like suits, and they look so cool, and now it's like, "But maybe I'm just like your dad, and I'm wearing just a regular sweater. I'm just a regular guy, not like a cool Las Vegas guy anymore. Now I'm just a regular dude who smokes a pipe and wears a sweater."

**Teresa:** Yes, exactly. These sweaters were adorably known as jingle bell sweaters. But most people, like you said, really saw these sweaters on television, right? Because still, we were still working on like, there wasn't like the mass production of these sweaters. They were all very handmade and special. So like, they were things you wore with your family at home.

**Travis:** So, for your Bings Crosby and your—

**Teresa:** And Deans.

**Travis:** Deans Martin, yeah.

**Teresa:** Yes. Yes. So, we have that going, and that's, you know, that's pretty steady. But enter into the counter culture of the '60s and '70s, where fashion was shifting and the Christmas sweater got pulled along for the ride, okay? So, we've got the bold patterns and the bright designs and the psychedelic colors. Maybe even, I don't know, Santa Claus is wearing sunglasses or something.

**Travis:** What? Get out of town! That was also when the sweater started getting really long, right? I'm picturing like the '60s, and I see like mod people wearing like the sweaters that like would go down, you know, mid-thigh or longer, with like shorts or something, you know what I mean? Like—

**Teresa:** Yeah, I totally get that.

**Travis:** Big, baggy sweaters kind of thing.

**Teresa:** Oh, yeah. And so, what we had are these sweaters that have the big, bright colors and the patterns. And not only are they like still winter themed, but they are becoming more and more... I don't—I want to say... just recognizable, right? And so then, what we've got is, like I said, the people who really loved the '50s were the people in the '80s.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** There are so many great, like, vintage items that are '80s does '50s. I have a couple of those vintage items myself. And so like, Madonna, right? Shoulder pads. And like Reagan, right?

**Travis:** Boo-boo!

**Teresa:** I know. But his whole thing was like, back to the atomic family unit type thing, right?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** So, he was really into the idea—

**Travis:** "You guys all remember how 30 years ago was better, because that's when you were kids."

**Teresa:** Uh-huh.

**Travis:** "And now you like me. And when you were kids, you didn't have to worry about anything. And that wasn't because you were just children, it's because the world was better!"

**Teresa:** Mm-hm... But now we have the '80s and we have puffy paint, we have bedazzlers and sequins, and all kinds of cool stuff.

**Travis:** Rhinestones.

**Teresa:** Absolutely. So then you can, you know, continue to live your life of excess in the '80s on your beautiful Christmas sweater!

**Travis:** Yeah! Christmas goes neon.

**Teresa:** Uh-huh.

**Travis:** You know, spandex.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** All these things. Probably didn't have spandex sweaters, though, now that I'm thinking about it.

**Teresa:** No...

**Travis:** No.

**Teresa:** But you could include spandex in it, I guess if you wanted to. You could include a felted teddy bear with pom poms.

**Travis:** Get out of town.

**Teresa:** You could include a disco ball tree.

**Travis:** That's too wild.

**Teresa:** Or maybe a knitted sweater with 12 different panels representing the 12 days of Christmas.

**Travis:** In public?

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** In this economy?

**Teresa:** [chuckles] And then we get to the '90s, right? Where these ugly Christmas sweaters become screen staples, like you mentioned. Christmas Vacation, The Santa Claus, Home Alone, even Bridget Jones' Diary, there's a very famous sweater that Colin Firth wears. It's the green turtleneck—

**Travis:** Not Colin Seventhst.

**Teresa:** No...

**Travis:** Or Colin Firthst. Colin Firth?

**Teresa:** Oh.

**Travis:** Colin Seventhst.

**Teresa:** Oh!

**Travis:** Colin Firthst.

**Teresa:** That's where you're going with this.

**Travis:** Colin Fourthst.

**Teresa:** I get it.

**Travis:** Colin Fifthst. That actually works. No, that one plays.

**Teresa:** [chuckles] It's a, like I said, it's a green turtleneck with a reindeer on it.

**Travis:** Like a Christmas reindeer?

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Then I see—I see the connection.

**Teresa:** The garment sold for 5,670 pounds, which is about \$7,600.

**Travis:** When you say the garment, do you mean like somebody bought the sweater he wore in the movie?

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** I actually thought it would be more. [chuckles]

**Teresa:** Oh, really?

**Travis:** In the—

**Teresa:** For a single sweater?

**Travis:** That Colin Firth wore?

**Teresa:** Yeah!

**Travis:** Like screen-worn?

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** It was on Colin Firth's body?

**Teresa:** I mean, I don't know about that.

**Travis:** This is what I'm asking. I'm saying that if someone said, "Hey, do you want to buy the sweater from Bridget Jones' Diary that Colin Firth wore?" I'd be like, "Oh, an identical one, how much is it?" And they'd be like, "5000 pounds." And I'd be like, "I don't know." And they're like, "No, it's actually like the screen-worn one that he had on his body in the movie." And then I'd—and I have never even seen Bridget Jones' Diary diary, but I think I'd start to think, well, 5000 pounds is kind of a steal for that.

**Teresa:** [chuckles] All right. Okay, so the 1990s, they kind of started falling out of favor, because it was seen as kind of kitschy and old fashioned and—

**Travis:** You get into the grunge thing, yeah.

**Teresa:** Yeah, we wanted Nirvana and flannel and stuff. But where these sweaters ended up? Thrift stores.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Where did we go to find these sweaters? Thrift stores.

**Travis:** Thrift stores.

**Teresa:** So, these kind of like kitschy vintage finds that are warm and festive and unique are very, very popular now, right? Especially with social media. What started as an ironic little holiday trend found itself a global stage. We've got hand me downs, DIY concoctions, secondhand treasures. And you know, this whimsy and creativity has become a staple of the Christmas wardrobe.

**Travis:** Before we go to a word from our sponsor, which we will, but first, do you think—morality question—no, judgment. Do you think it's better—would you rather find like a vintage or used or something sweater, that at some point somebody wore and thought it was fashionable, but now you're like, that's gaudy, that'll be perfect, or buy one that was like made specifically to be an ugly sweater and then like sold that way?

**Teresa:** No, I like the vintage one.

**Travis:** Yeah?

**Teresa:** Yeah. Because I think that they're—in the like vintage finds, you can still see the love, even if you don't think that it is fashionable, right? Even if you are wearing it to be part of this kind of like meme or whatever, maybe that's happened. There's still love in that garment. Whereas if there's something like, you know, Temu or Shein or whatever, right? There's not a lot of love in that.

**Travis:** I think that—I'm gonna take a bold stance here. I think we should live in a time of post irony. And I think if you're gonna wear something to show off your personality, it should be because you find an appreciation of the thing.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** It might be like, "I love how bold and weird these colors were that there was a time in my parents' generation, or my grandparents' generation, where this was fashion, right? And it's like so different to me now that it boggles my mind." That, to me, is a lot different than, "Look how ugly this is. Isn't it terrible?" Right? Where it's just like, you love how terrible it is? Because then you need to find a different way of expressing that.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** Because you don't actually think it's awful, you think it's wild, you think it's weird, you think it's so unique, right? These are things that we can love about something.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** I don't think that ugliness or something being terrible is something that we love about something. It's a shorthand way to make it seem aloof and unattached to things that we actually care about, or think are unique or special, to insult them and make it seem like it's ironic that you like them.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** So I think wild sweater party, funky sweater party, vintage sweater party.

**Teresa:** I mean, I think that when you say "ugly sweater party," it evokes a certain image. You don't have to mean it to be ugly.

**Travis:** So it's in quotes?

**Teresa:** Yes, it's in quotes.

**Travis:** "Ugly."

**Teresa:** "Ugly."

**Travis:** Yeah. Well, you know, I think now's the perfect time to say a thank you note to our sponsor. Let's do it.

[theme music plays]

**Travis:** You know, they say a picture is worth a thousand words. But do you know what else is worth a thousand words, Teresa?

**Teresa:** Is it a thousand?

**Travis:** A thousand words—

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Is worth a thousand words. A picture is worth a thousand words you can make up about the picture. What do I see in this picture? But wouldn't you rather have that story told to you by the person who lived it? I know I would, because that's what a story's worth, from Storyworth.

**Teresa:** Oh!

**Travis:** Boom! Boom. [spoofs gunshot sounds] We did it!

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** "Oh my god, he's the world's greatest!"

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** Because Storyworth can help you find presents and receive the gift of stories from the people you love. Each week, Storyworth emails a loved one a question prompt. They can either write a story over email or record it over the phone for Storyworth to transcribe. And after a year, Storyworth compiles your loved one's stories and photos into a beautiful keepsake hardcover book. So, then you're getting the story and the picture. That's like 2000 words!

**Teresa:** Wow.

**Travis:** That's like a full-blown essay!

**Teresa:** That is worth it.

**Travis:** Oh, up top! Ah, we had to reach across the desk. This year, they added a bunch of new features to make storytelling even easier, with personalized questions and magic editor. They also have their magic layout and new book designs, and vibrant colored printing. These books are beautiful! They've printed over a million books and preserved 35 million family stories since their founding 13 years ago. And they have over 48,000 five-star reviews on Trustpilot. Don't let these stories slip away to time, save them, have them, know them, live them. Love them, laugh them. Give your loved ones a unique—[chuckles] I don't know.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** Give your loved ones a unique keepsake they'll cherish for years, and you'll cherish for years! Storyworth Memoirs. Right now, save \$10 or more during their holiday sale when you go to [storyworth.com/shmanners](http://storyworth.com/shmanners). That's [storyworth.com/shmanners](http://storyworth.com/shmanners) to save \$10 or more on your order.

[break]

**J.Keith:** Say, what's the trivia show where dreams come true?

**Helen:** It's got to be Go Fact Yourself!

[applause]

**J.Keith [live]:** Legend in the house!

**J.Keith:** We quiz celebrity contestants about topics they love.

**Helen:** Then bring out surprise experts—

**J.Keith:** To delight and amaze.

**J.Keith [live]:** And then finally, tell us why you know and love the lyrics to the song "Knockin' Boots" by Candyman.

**Helen [live]:** Joining us tonight is a rapper and producer, it's Candyman!

[applause]

**Guest 1:** Oh, Candyman!

**Guest 2:** This is among the greatest moments of my life.

[audience laughs]

**Guest 3:** This is one of mine too. I love it.

**Helen:** That's Go Fact Yourself!

**J.Keith:** Twice a month, every month.

**Helen:** Here on Maximum Fun!

[break]

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[break]

**Travis:** So, sweaters, what are they? Where do they come from? We don't know!

**Teresa:** No, we already talked about that.

**Travis:** Welcome back to Mystery Sweaters, with Travis and Teresa.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** Aliens?

**Teresa:** I already explained where sweaters come from.

**Travis:** Do you think that if aliens—

**Teresa:** Elanor Roosevelt made all of the sweaters in the world. [chuckles]

**Travis:** Whoa! Do you think if aliens had sweaters, there'd be two sleeves on the same side, because they'd have all like alien arms and stuff?

**Teresa:** Hm...

**Travis:** Or like two neck holes? Can you imagine? A space for their tails?

**Teresa:** Amazing. So, let's go over some ugly sweater Christmas party etiquette, because you'll be invited to one of these days.

**Travis:** Would you say sweatetiquette?

**Teresa:** Ooh, I love it! So, you gotta play the game, you know? Play the game. You're going to the party—

**Travis:** Poker.

**Teresa:** No, not that, of the sweaters.

**Travis:** Oh, okay.

**Teresa:** Play in the space—

**Travis:** I was thinking—

**Teresa:** With the sweaters.

**Travis:** About like you know, if you're gonna play the Game Boy, you gotta learn to play it right. You got to know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em, know when to walk away, know when to run.

**Teresa:** Oh, boy.

**Travis:** You never count your money when you're sittin' at the table. There'll be time enough for countin' when the dealing's done.

**Teresa:** Yeah, great job. That was great.

**Travis:** That's just a little life lesson. I'm giving that one free to our listeners, you know what I mean?

**Teresa:** Mm-hm! But if you show up at the ugly sweater Christmas party and you're in like your cute little jewel tones or whatever, and you're like, "Oh, I forgot." That's not—that's not fun. That's not cool.

**Travis:** In general, if you go to a themed party and you think it is cool to not participate, you are incorrect.

**Teresa:** Indeed.

**Travis:** I don't care what the theme is, unless you, honest to god didn't know that there was a theme, choosing not to participate thinking it'll send the signal that you're too cool to do the thing, it's exactly the opposite. No one is ever going to look at someone who chose not to participate when everyone else did and think, "Yeah, they're cooler than us." They'll think, "Oh, come on, man."

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** "Okay, so you're no fun."

**Teresa:** I agree. In fact, this is maybe one occasion where you're encouraged to go over the top and all out. Maybe you want to incorporate your entire ensemble. So like you could—

**Travis:** Make pants out of sweaters!

**Teresa:** Sure, but I was thinking more if you had something—like a sweater with a Christmas tree on it, you could wear like a headband or a hat that has a star on it. Or you could put like, I mean, I guess you could put like wrapping paper on your shoes to make your shoes look like presents under the tree. Or you could attach a garland, right? Down your arms, with the big bow on your collar, right? So then when you circle your arms up, you're a wreath, right? That'd be cool. Or you, there's one—

**Travis:** It would be cool the gift wrap yourself in such a way that like after a while, you unwrap it to reveal the gift underneath, which is your ugly sweater.

**Teresa:** Ooh. You could attach stockings at strategic places to your arms and wear like a fireplace sweater, and then you're the mantle with stockings.

**Travis:** You could have five sweaters, layers of sweaters, and like every 35 minutes, have a timer that goes off and you remove a layer of sweater to reveal the sweater underneath. Like a, what are those, Matryoshka dolls?

**Teresa:** Mm-hm! Yeah, something—

**Travis:** As you go down. And like maybe it's a theme, it's a pattern of images revealing further and further, until the big reveal. Oh, no, that's it! Okay—

**Teresa:** Okay, all right.

**Travis:** 12 sweaters. Now listen, you're gonna need to find thin sweaters for this to work.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** Or else you're gonna have a hard time getting like your arms down. But 12 sweaters—

**Teresa:** You're gonna be—

**Travis:** First one, partridge in a pear tree, that's the only thing on it. Next one, you're gonna have a partridge in a pear tree and two turtle doves. Next one, partridge in a pear tree, two turtle doves, three French hens. And so on and so forth, until your last sweater has all 12 on it.

**Teresa:** Wow.

**Travis:** And then you take that off because you're so hot.

**Teresa:** That's commitment.

**Travis:** And you're just gonna stand there shirtless, outside, in the winter, trying not to get heat stroke. [chuckles]

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Because you've been wearing 12 sweaters for most of the night.

**Teresa:** Right. So, I would caution you against wearing something too big or too bulky or maybe breakable, right? Some of these sweaters sometimes have like little bobbles and stuff on them, make sure that they are appropriate for the environment and won't like smash or whatever. Also, let's make sure that you understand the audience of your sweater, right? So, if you have a collection, maybe, or you have one of those like more like jokey, kind of novelty type sweaters than the original type, you want to make sure that they are not offensive to like if your grandma's going to be there, right?

**Travis:** Unless you have a cool grandma.

**Teresa:** Maybe.

**Travis:** Unless you have a cool grandma who knows how to party!

**Teresa:** Yeah! But you know your audience, right?

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** So you want to make sure that if something has like alcohol theme or violence theme, you know, like the idea of like Santa got run over by a reindeer or whatever, that song thing, you want to make sure—

**Travis:** I don't—hey, baby?

**Teresa:** What?

**Travis:** You know it wasn't Santa who got run over by a reindeer, right?

**Teresa:** Oh, it was grandma!

**Travis:** Right.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** Because I think that that song would have a much different tone if it was like, "Hey, everyone, Christmas is canceled this year."

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** "In a tragically ironic turn of events, Santa, having gotten thrown from his sleigh, was trampled by his own reindeer."

**Teresa:** You definitely shouldn't wear that sweater to a party.

**Travis:** No, unless it's like front page newspaper like themed sweater that says, "Tragedy struck today."

**Teresa:** With children, don't wear that sweater.

**Travis:** Oh, yeah, that would bring up so many more questions than you have answers to.

**Teresa:** Yes. And so, we are urging you to opt for thrift stores or a DIY option, because those sweaters are usually more—they're just more whimsical, right? They're more—they can be closer to your heart that way than one of the like mass-produced kind of sweaters, right?

**Travis:** I would also highly recommend, along those lines, when you go to these things and you see, you know, a friend or somebody, a family member or whatever, and you want to compliment their sweater—like you know, in some ways, caught your notice.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** You can compliment the theme and stuff in a positive way, like we were saying earlier, like, "Oh my god, that sweater is so gross," right? You don't know, that might have been a parent's sweater. It might have been something where it's like, "Yeah, this is like, handed down to me from my grandma."

**Teresa:** Exactly.

**Travis:** "And it has a lot of memories because it's vintage and wild," right? So instead like, "Wow, those colors are so vibrant." Or like, "Is that vintage? It's straight out of the '80s, that's glorious."

**Teresa:** Or, "I've never seen anything like that before."

**Travis:** Right. Like there's—

**Teresa:** That's a perfect one, even if you don't like it, right? You can say that you've never seen anything like it.

**Travis:** There are ways to compliment on the theme without incorporating kind of backhanded insults, if only because you do not know that person's connection to the sweater that they're wearing.

**Teresa:** Right. I would also say that if you go to a holiday party, make sure you don't arrive empty-handed. We always advocate for host gifts, but it's always great to contribute to like the food scene, if you want to bring some *Christmas cookies*. Or—

**Travis:** You could also bring—there's like bottle koozies that look like little sweaters—

**Teresa:** Oh, yeah, that's cute.

**Travis:** That you can do. Perfect for the theme.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** Perfect for the theme.

**Teresa:** Totally. I've also seen lots of candles that are called "sweater weather."

**Travis:** You could make—like, see if you could find a sweater-shaped bowl, and then you make like a sweet dip in it with like lines of like icing and stuff in it. So then as people like dip pretzels or whatever in it, it gets messier and messier throughout the night.

**Teresa:** That's amazing.

**Travis:** Thank you. I'm a good host, and I think of lots of fun ideas.

**Teresa:** You sure do. But go to your holiday sweater parties and lean into it, you'll love it.

**Travis:** But don't lean into other people's sweaters, unless invited.

**Teresa:** [chuckles] Okay.

**Travis:** Unless you have permission. Hey, in all seriousness, that is a thing in general when we talk about costumes, even sweaters.

**Teresa:** Oh yeah, sure.

**Travis:** Even if somebody's sweater looks so tactile and fun to touch, that's not consent that they wore a sweater that has like, you know, like jingle balls or something or like ornaments or whatever on it.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** Don't reach out and touch someone else's body without consent.

**Teresa:** That's right.

**Travis:** Even if the sweater looks like something a cat would go absolutely wild for, they didn't wear it thinking, "I hope every rando in town touches me." Got it?

**Teresa:** That's a great reminder.

**Travis:** Thank you. Another great reminder, we say it every year, anytime we're talking about holidays, make good choices.

**Teresa:** Yeah!

**Travis:** We worry about you. If you're going to holiday parties, don't drink and drive, or get a ride, or have a designated driver. Mom and Dad just care about you and want you to be safe.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** Speaking of holiday parties, though—

**Teresa:** Yeah?

**Travis:** Friday, when this comes out, the Candlenights video on demand is coming out tonight, Friday the 19<sup>th</sup>, at 9PM Eastern Time. And then it will be available through January 4<sup>th</sup>, so you can watch it, even if you're listening to this later. But we've watched some cuts from it, it's really good. The people who filmed it did a great job, and frankly, we did a great job.

**Teresa:** [chuckles] And we'll be live in the chat to tell you what a great job we did.

**Travis:** Yeah, there will be a lot—you'll get—oh, this will be fun. You'll get the same experience that Teresa has when I come across a My Brother, My Brother and Me clip like on TikTok or YouTube or something, and I'm like, "Hey, baby, baby, stop what you're doing. Watch this. See how funny I am."

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** But you'll get to do that! You'll get to like, you'll get to role play as if I'm in the room with you going, "Shut up, shut up, look how cool I am."

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** God, I wish that was a joke. Okay, you can go to [bit.ly/candlenights2025](https://bit.ly/candlenights2025) to get your tickets now. And in all seriousness, it's also a great chance to help out Harmony House in Huntington, West Virginia. All proceeds from those tickets and stuff go directly to Harmony House. It's a wonderful organization that we've worked with for several years now. We're so happy to be able to support them, and you can support them too. [Bit.ly/candlenights2025](https://bit.ly/candlenights2025). 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 Pin-up 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. Also, we are always taking your topic submissions, your questions, your idioms. Send those to shmannerscast@gmail.com, and say hi to Alex, because she reads every single one.

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

**Teresa:** No RSVP required.

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

**Teresa:** Manners-shmanners, get it?

["Shmanners Theme" by brentalfloss plays]

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