



ESL Podcast 499 – Marrying a Gold Digger

GLOSSARY

boy toy – a young, attractive man whom one dates for fun or for a short period of time, without being very serious about the relationship

* Melina really likes to date. She must have had at least 10 boy toys in the past year!

to take the cake – to be the biggest, best, worst, most shocking, or most important thing in a list or series of things

* I know you've lied before, but telling him you're single when you're actually married really takes the cake!

age difference – the gap between two people's ages; the number of years between the age of two people

* My sister and I have a three-year age difference: I'm 32 and she's 29.

to dress for the part – to wear clothes that are appropriate for what one wants to do, be, or become

* If you want to become a vice-president, you should dress for the part. Stop wearing jeans to work and start wearing suits instead.

bling – expensive jewelry and accessories that one wears to get other people's attention and make other people think that one has a lot of money

* That dress would look a lot better with some bling, like a nice necklace and some earrings.

to set (someone) back – to cost someone a lot of money

* She bought a new piano that set her back almost \$2,800.

grand – one thousand dollars; \$1,000

* He hopes to make 60 grand next year, even though last year he barely made \$50,000.

token of (one's) affection – a sign or symbol of one's love and care for another person

* During the wedding ceremony, he said, "Please accept this ring as a token of my affection and love" as he put the ring on her finger.

to hold the purse strings – to decide how money is spent, especially in a family or in a business or organization

* When we were growing up, our mother held the purse strings and never let us buy anything fun.



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to prey on (someone) – to try to control or hurt an animal or person who is weaker than oneself

* That preacher preyed on people who were poor and wanted to believe in miracles.

wrapped around (one's) little finger – in control of a person; able to influence what another person does, often because that person is in love with oneself

* That child has his parents wrapped around his little finger. They do whatever he asks them to do!

for (one's) sake – for one's own benefit; to help oneself

* I really like my daughter's new boyfriend, but I hope she doesn't marry him for my sake. She should marry him only if they really love each other.

gold digger – a person who marries for money; a person who marries another person because he or she is rich

* It must be hard for a millionaire to date. How would you know who really loved you, and who just a gold digger and wanted to get your money?

true colors – the way a person really is; the way a person really acts when he or she isn't pretending to be different

* When Lilly first started working here, everyone thought she was wonderful, but now we've all seen her true colors and we know that she isn't very nice.

the altar – the small table that a man and a woman stand in front of during their wedding ceremony

* Harriet has already been to the altar three times – and she's only 27!

cynic – a person who is very negative and always thinks the worst things possible about other people; a person who never believes that other people are kind or honest

* After 30 years of working with criminals as a policeman, he's a cynic who has a hard time trusting other people.

hopeless romantic – a person who wants to fall in love and always believes the best things possible about other people; a person who still believes in love, even if he or she has been hurt many times in the past

* Amy is a homeless romantic who still believes she'll find Mr. Right one day.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What does Sinobu mean when he says that Jesse “takes the cake”?
 - a) Jesse ate too much cake at the party.
 - b) Jesse seems very sweet.
 - c) Jesse is very young for Liza.
 2. How did Jesse get the expensive watch?
 - a) He bought it.
 - b) He stole it.
 - c) Liza bought it for him.
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WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

grand

The word “grand,” in this podcast, means one thousand dollars: “You can’t buy a home in this neighborhood for less than 400 grand.” The word “grand” also means very big or fancy: “They live in a grand old house on the hill.” The word “grand” can mean ambitious, or with a lot of plans for the future: “Camilo has grand plans to become a medical researcher and find the cure for cancer.” The phrase “the grand total” is the final sum of many numbers: “The apples are \$1.57, the carrots are \$1.36, and the potatoes are \$3.64, for a grand total of \$6.57.” Finally, the phrase “the grand old age of (number)” is used to talk about very old people: “We had a big party when our great-grandfather reached the grand old age of 98.”

token

In this podcast, the word “token” means a sign or symbol of something, especially of the way someone feels: “Please accept this book as a token of our appreciation for you coming here and speaking tonight.” Or, “I think we should buy her some flowers as a token of our gratitude.” A “token” is also a small, round piece of metal like a coin that is used to make a machine work: “Where can I buy a token for the metro?” Or, “Do the public phones accept coins or tokens?” Finally, the phrase “by the same token” means in the same way or for the same reason: “He doesn’t like cake, but by the same token he doesn’t really like any desserts.”



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CULTURE NOTE

When people get married, they usually “promise” (say that they will do something) to love and honor another person “till death do us part” (until one of us dies). However, some American “celebrities” (famous people, especially actors or musicians) have been married many times.

For example, Elizabeth Taylor is an American actress who is well known for her acting in many movies. However, she is even more famous for her marriages. She has been married eight times! Her first marriage, in 1950, lasted less than nine months. Her third marriage ended when her husband “passed away” (died), but all the other marriages have ended in divorce. She married one man, Richard Burton, another very famous actor, twice: once in 1964; they were divorced in 1974, and once in 1975; they divorced again in 1976. Currently she is 77 years old and divorced. It will be interesting to see if she decides to get married again.

Mickey Rooney is another American actor who has been married eight times. His first marriage “took place” (happened) in 1942, but they were divorced the following year. He “went through” (experienced) many marriages and divorces, and his current marriage took place in 1978. Today, 31 years later, he is still married to that woman, making his eighth marriage longer than all seven of his earlier marriages “combined” (added together).

Many “Hollywood marriages” (marriages among actors and other people involved in making American movies) don’t last very long. Hollywood marriages and divorces are often “fodder” (something used for a specific purpose) for “tabloids” (newspapers that gossip about celebrities, saying bad things about them that aren’t always true).

Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – c; 2 – c



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 499: Marrying a Gold Digger.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 499. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Our website is eslpod.com. Go there today to download a Learning Guide for this episode, an 8- to 10-page guide that will help you improve your English even faster by giving you vocabulary, definitions, sample sentences, additional definitions, comprehension questions, cultural notes, and a complete transcript of this episode.

This episode is a dialogue between Liza and Sinobu about the topic of people dating other people not because they love them or are romantically interested, but because they want to get their money. No one would ever do that, of course! Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Liza: Isn't Jesse wonderful? I'm so glad you got to meet him last night.

Sinobu: Uh, he's a little young for you, don't you think? I know you've had boy toys in the past, but he takes the cake.

Liza: He's no boy toy! It's true that there's a 30-year age difference, but who cares about age when you're talking about love?

Sinobu: Well, he's certainly dressed for the part, with all of that bling. That watch must have set him back a couple of grand, at least.

Liza: Oh, that was a little token of my affection for our one-month anniversary. I just wanted him to know how much I cared about him.

Sinobu: Well, he certainly knows now who holds the purse strings, if he didn't before. I only hope he's not preying on you.

Liza: How can you say that? I've never met anyone more honest or sincere.



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Sinobu: He has you wrapped around his little finger, that's for sure. I hope, for your sake, he's not a gold digger, or that you see his true colors before you make it to the altar – again.

Liza: Oh, I knew it was a mistake talking to you about Jesse. You're such a cynic!

Sinobu: And you're a hopeless romantic!

[end of dialogue]

Liza says to Sinobu, "Isn't Jesse wonderful?" Jesse is a man's name. "I'm so glad you got to meet him last night." Sinobu says, "Uh, he's a little young for you, don't you think? I know you've had boy toys in the past, but he takes the cake." Sinobu is saying that Liza's new boyfriend is too young for her. He talks about boy toys. A "boy toy" is a young, attractive man whom one may date for a short period of time. If you are older – if you're older woman, or if you're much older than the man, you date this person, but you may not be very seriously interested in them for a relationship.

Sinobu says, "I know you've had boy toys in the past, but Jesse takes the cake." The expression "to take the cake" means to be the biggest, the best, even the worst, the most shocking, the most important, the most something in a series or a list of things. Usually it's something bad that the person has done, or you're saying negative about this case – this circumstance. In this case, Sinobu is saying that Jesse takes the cake, meaning he's the youngest or the most obvious example of a boy toy, not someone that Liza should be dating.

Liza says, "He's no boy toy!" (he's not a boy toy). It's true," she says, "that there's a 30-year age difference, but who cares about age when you're talking about love?" An "age difference" is the difference between two people's ages. My father married my mother, who was four years younger than he; the age difference was four years. Sometimes the age difference can be very large; if you're the, I don't know, prime minister of a country, you might be dating someone much, much younger than you – although some people probably wouldn't like that! Anyway, Liza says there's a 30-year age difference, so Jesse is 30 years younger than she is. Here in Hollywood, this is not uncommon, especially for the man to be older and the woman to be younger, but this is the opposite case.

Sinobu says, "Well, he's certainly dressed for the part, with all of that bling." "To dress for the part" means to wear clothes that are appropriate for what you want



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to do. Someone may say to you, when you're starting a new job, "Be sure to dress the part," or "dress for the part," meaning wear the clothes that are appropriate for this office, for this job. "Bling" (bling) is an informal expression, fairly new in the last probably 10-15 years; it means expensive jewelry, things that you wear such as a watch, or a if you're a woman, earrings, a necklace for either a man or a woman. Often, these are expensive pieces of jewelry, things with diamonds in them for example, that's called "bling." It's a very informal term; it's common among the younger generation, I would say. But here, Sinobu is saying that this Jesse has a lot of bling. "That watch," he says, "must have set him back a couple of grand, at least." Sinobu is referring to Jesse's watch, saying that it must have set him back a lot of money. "To set (someone) back" means to cost you a lot of money. "I bought a new car and it set me back 15,000 dollars," for example. That means the car cost 15,000 dollars, that's what I had to pay for it.

Sinobu says that that watch must have set him back a couple of grand. "A grand" means, in the U.S., 1,000 dollars. It's an informal word, just like "buck," which is one dollar: "How much is that?" "It's ten bucks." "It's a thousand bucks." A thousand bucks could also be called simply "a grand." It cost him a grand or two grand or three grand. Notice that we don't say "three grands" or "two grands." Even if it's plural, it just remains "grand." In this case, he's saying that the watch cost a couple of grand, meaning two or three thousand dollars.

Liza says, "Oh, that was a little token of my affection for our one-month anniversary." "A token of your affection" is a sign or a symbol that you love someone or that you care for someone; it's a gift – something that you give that person. A man may give his wife a necklace as a token of his affection – affection or love. And if he forgets to give a token of his affection, for example on their wedding anniversary, well, he will probably be sleeping on the couch. Not that I've ever done that, of course!

Sinobu is, of course, not too impressed – doesn't really like Jesse, and Liza tries to defend him by saying, "Oh, that watch is something is something I gave him." Sinobu then says, "Well, he certainly knows now who holds the purse strings, if he didn't before." "To hold the purse strings" means to be the person who decides how much money is spent. A "purse" is a bag that holds money. Nowadays, many women have purses; it's not that common for a man. But the strings of a purse are the pieces of material that that you would use, in an old purse, to make it tight. You have to loosen the strings in order to open the little bag, which is the purse. Nowadays, modern purses don't have strings; they have zippers or buttons. But the idea here is that the person that holds the purse strings is the person who decides how money is going to be spent. In this case,



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Sinobu is saying that Jesse has control of the money; he holds the purse strings even though it's not his money.

Sinobu says, "I hope he's not preying on you." "To prey (prey) on (someone)" means to try to control or hurt an animal or a person who is weaker than you are. There's another word, "pray" (pray), that is related to saying something to God or to some divine being. But here we're not talking about religion, we're talking about someone who's trying to control or hurt another person. Usually, that person is weaker than you are.

Liza is upset, she says, "How can you say that? I've never met anyone more honest or sincere." Sinobu says, "He has you wrapped around his little finger, that's for sure." The expression "to have (someone) wrapped around your finger" or "wrapped around your little finger" means that that person controls you; that person is able to influence you, often because that person is in love with you. Really, it's because you are in love with them that they are able to control you. You may think they are in love with you, they may not be, but that person controls you because you love them.

So, Sinobu is saying that Jesse has Liza wrapped around his little finger. He says, "I hope, for your sake, he's not a gold digger, or that you see his true colors before you make it to the altar – again." Couple of different expressions there: first, "for your sake" means for your own benefit, to help you. "I hope, for your sake," meaning for your good, "that Jesse's not a gold digger." "Gold," here, just represents money. "To dig for gold" means to try to find gold, for example, in the earth or in a rock in the mountains. Here, however, a "gold digger" is a person who marries for money, someone who marries or dates someone so that they can get that person's money because they are rich, or richer than the person who is the gold digger. It's an insulting term; usually we think of gold diggers being women marrying rich men, especially younger women marrying older rich men. But here, the gold digger is a man.

Sinobu says he hopes that Liza will see Jesse's true colors before she makes it to the altar. "To see (someone's) true colors" means to see how someone really is, to see the truth about someone. The "altar" here refers to getting married. In a church, in the front of the church there's often an altar, especially in a Christian church. The "altar" is where something is sacrificed, at least traditionally – in traditional religious ceremonies. Here, however, it just refers to going to a church to get married, since, once again, traditionally most people went to a church or a religious house of some sort to get married. Obviously, Liza has been married before.



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Liza says, “Oh, I knew it was a mistake talking to you about Jesse. You’re such a cynic!” A “cynic” (cynic) is a person who is very negative, who always thinks the worst about something or someone. Sinobu responds by saying, “And you’re a hopeless romantic!” A “hopeless romantic” is a person who wants to fall in love, who always believes the best about other people because they want to be loved by those people. It’s also someone who may have been hurt many times in the past because they don’t consider the true colors of the person that they are falling in love with sometimes.

Now let’s listen to the dialogue, this time at a normal speed.

[start of dialogue]

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[end of dialogue]



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Our script was written by someone who's never a cynic, Dr. Lucy Tse.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us next time on ESL Podcast.

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