



## GLOSSARY

**matchmaking** – the practice of helping other people find a romantic partner, start a romantic relationship, and get married

\* Have you considered using an online matchmaking service to find a girlfriend?

**confirmed bachelor** – a man who does not want to be in a romantic relationship or get married, and chooses to live alone

\* Harold is a confirmed bachelor. He has lived alone in that apartment for the past 12 years, and he is perfectly happy.

**looking to** – interested in doing something; hoping or trying to have or do something

\* Are you looking to buy a car within the next five years?

**eligible bachelor** – a man who is not in a relationships and has many characteristics, such as wealth and good looks, that make him desirable as a romantic partner and husband

\* Do you know any eligible bachelors who might want to date my cousin?

**spinster** – a negative term for an older, unmarried woman who is considered to be too old to marry

\* You need to stop thinking about your ex-boyfriend and start dating again, before you become a spinster!

**to set (someone) up** – to arrange for someone to meet a potential romantic partner and go on a date because one thinks that the two people have things in common and may fall in love

\* Mom, please don't set me up with anyone else from your office. I can find a date on my own.

**prodding** – a gentle push or encouragement to do something

\* Stephen never would have finished that manuscript without his editor's prodding.

**fear of commitment** – feelings of worry and anxiety when thinking about promising to spend the rest of one's life with another person

\* Don't talk about marriage with Jason. He has a fear of commitment, and if you keep bringing up the topic, he'll probably end the relationship.



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**to overcome** – to successfully deal with a challenge or problem so that it is no longer a problem; to meet a challenge and succeed

\* Hans overcame poverty to become a successful businessman.

**meddling** – involved in other people’s private affairs, especially when those people would prefer not to have one’s involvement

\* The teachers are very frustrated with the new, meddling principal who always drops in on classes and asks to review the lesson plans.

**on the prowl** – hunting; searching for something, especially searching for a romantic or sexual partner

\* Several police officers are on the prowl, looking for the man who escaped from prison earlier today.

**celibate** – purposefully choosing not to have sex, often due to religious beliefs

\* Becoming a Catholic priest means becoming celibate.

**assumption** – something that one believes to be true, although one does not have any proof

\* Our budget is based on the assumption that inflation will be 3% annually.

**to not know the first thing about** – to be completely unfamiliar with something and have no knowledge of it

\* Before we had kids, we didn’t know the first thing about changing diapers or making baby food.

**idyllic** – perfect; heavenly; very happy, peaceful, enjoyable, and beautiful

\* This is such an idyllic landscape! I wish I were a painter so I could share the view with others.



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## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What is a confirmed bachelor?
  - a) Someone with a college degree
  - b) Someone who doesn't want to get married
  - c) Someone who is divorced
  
2. What does Alex mean when he says, "a bachelor's life is idyllic"?
  - a) A bachelor has time to think about important ideas.
  - b) A bachelor is able to save a lot of money.
  - c) A bachelor's life is very nice and enjoyable.

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## WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

### **confirmed**

The phrase "confirmed bachelor," in this podcast, means a man who does not want to be in a romantic relationship or get married, and chooses to live alone: "Kensuke's heart was broken by his college girlfriend, and ever since then, he has lived as a confirmed bachelor." As a verb, "to confirm" means to state or show that something is true: "These recent research studies confirm the scientists' theory." The phrase "to confirm a reservation" means to check and make sure that a reservation (an arrangement to use or have something at a specific time in the future) has been made correctly: "Please call the hotel to confirm our room reservation." Finally, the phrase "to be confirmed" means to participate in a religious, especially Catholic, ceremony that makes one a full member of the church: "Do you have to be an adult to be confirmed in the church?"

### **to set (someone) up**

In this podcast, the phrase "to set (someone) up" means to arrange for someone to meet a potential romantic partner and go on a date because one thinks that the two people have things in common and may fall in love: "You and my brother have so much in common! I'd love to set you up on a date with him." The phrase "to set (someone) straight" means to educate someone with correct information or the proper way of doing something: "This training is designed to set our employees straight about procedures for handling confidential information." Finally, the phrase "to set (someone) free" means to let someone move around freely: "How did it feel to be set free after so many years in prison?"



## **CULTURE NOTE**

### **The Bachelor & The Bachelorette**

The Bachelor and The Bachelorette are popular “reality TV shows” (shows made by filming regular people in their interactions, not actors following a script) and dating “game shows” (TV shows about a competition). For example, in each season of The Bachelor, the show selects a “wealthy” (with a lot of money), “attractive” (good-looking) “bachelor” (an unmarried man) and puts him in a “luxurious” (very nice, fancy, expensive, and comfortable) environment with approximately 25 beautiful young women. The “premise” (main idea) of the show is that the bachelor will “propose to” (ask to marry) one of these women at the end of the season. In The Bachelorette, the “genders” (male/female) are “reversed” (switched), but the premise is the same.

The episodes show how the relationships develop as the “contestants” (the people who are competing for something) get to know each other and the bachelor. At first, they stay in the luxurious “accommodations” (where someone stays and sleeps), but as the show “progresses” (advances; continues), they go on individual dates, group dates, and trips to romantic destinations. At the end of each episode, if the bachelor gives a woman a rose, she is safe and will be in the next episode. Women who do not get a rose are “eliminated” and have to leave.

In the “penultimate” (second-to-last; one before the last) episode, only two women are left, and each of them say that they hope the bachelor will propose to them. Of course, the bachelor proposes to only one of them (or, in some cases, neither), leaving one of them “heartbroken” (extremely sad). Many of the couples have a “short-lived” (not lasting for very long) relationship after the show’s conclusion before “breaking up” (ending a romantic relationship), but a few have married and/or had children.

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



## **COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT**

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 1,062 – Being a Bachelor.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 1,062. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Visit our website at [ESLPod.com](http://ESLPod.com). Become a member of ESL Podcast and download the Learning Guide for this episode. You can also take a look at our ESL Podcast Store, which has some additional courses in Business and Daily English.

This episode is a dialogue between Iris and Alex about remaining unmarried. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Iris: I'm thinking of inviting Simone and Jerry over for dinner.

Alex: This isn't another attempt at matchmaking, is it? Jerry is a confirmed bachelor and he's not looking to marry or become involved in a relationship.

Iris: He's not a confirmed bachelor. In this neighborhood, with so many single women, he's an eligible bachelor.

Alex: You mean in this neighborhood full of old spinsters! Stop trying to set him up with one of them.

Iris: How do you know he doesn't want a relationship? Maybe he's just shy and needs a little prodding. Maybe he has a fear of commitment and we can all help him overcome it.

Alex: Maybe he just wants to be left alone by meddling neighbors and ladies on the prowl. There are many benefits to remaining a bachelor.

Iris: You mean living a celibate and empty life?

Alex: You're making too many assumptions. You don't know the first thing about his life and whether he's happy or not. In many ways, a bachelor's life is idyllic.



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Iris: How can you say that?

Alex: Would any bachelor have to have this conversation with anyone, ever?

[end of dialogue]

We're listening to a conversation between Iris and Alex. Iris begins by saying, "I'm thinking of inviting Simone and Jerry over for dinner." Alex says, "This isn't another attempt at matchmaking is it?" Iris wants to invite a couple of friends over to have dinner, but Alex suspects – he thinks – that what she's really doing is trying to be a matchmaker.

"To matchmake" (matchmake) means to try to introduce one person – one single person, one unmarried person – to another person that you think they might like. So, this is what "matchmaking" is, and in some cultures there are matchmakers who help arrange marriages, help young people find each other. This is done, of course, informally in all cultures. Your parents try to introduce you to a nice girl or a nice boy that they think you may want to marry.

Alex says, "Jerry is a confirmed bachelor and he's not looking to marry or become involved in a relationship." One of the two people that Iris wants to invite to dinner is Jerry. But according to Alex, Jerry is a "confirmed bachelor." A "bachelor" (bachelor) is a man who is not married and typically is not involved in a romantic relationship – one who chooses to live alone. A "confirmed bachelor" would be a man who has probably decided he's never going to marry.

Iris says, "He's not a confirmed bachelor," referring to Jerry, of course. "In this neighborhood, with so many single women, he's an eligible bachelor." The term "eligible (eligible) bachelor" refers to a man who is not in a relationship, who is not married but would be a desirable partner – someone who a woman would want to marry, perhaps because he has a lot of money and/or he's good-looking. I was neither of those things when I got married. I'm still neither of those things.

Alex says, "You mean in this neighborhood full of old spinsters!" Alex uses the word "spinsters" (spinsters) to describe older unmarried women who are considered by some too old to get married. The word "spinster" is a very negative way of describing an older unmarried woman. I certainly would not recommend using that term, but it was popular many years ago. Alex is using it as an insult here. He's insulting the women who live in that neighborhood, saying that they would not be good matches for Jerry.



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Alex says to Iris, “Stop trying to set him up with one of them.” “To set someone up” is a two-word phrasal verb meaning to arrange for someone to meet a potential romantic partner. It’s similar to matchmaking. To set someone up is to try to get someone to go out on a date with another person when you think the two people might be interested romantically in each other.

I was set up once for a date, what we would call in this instance a “blind (blind) date.” A blind date is when you don’t know the other person, but you both know someone who sets you up, who arranges for you to go on a date. I did this once and it didn’t work out very well. My father and mother, however, met on a blind date, and they had 11 children, so sometimes it works. Just not for me.

Alex is telling Iris that she should stop trying to set Jerry up with these women. Iris says, “How do you know he doesn’t want a relationship? Maybe he” – Jerry – “he’s just shy and needs a little prodding.” “To prod (prod) someone” is to encourage someone to do something, to sort of push them to do something. Iris says, “Maybe he has a fear of commitment and we can all help him overcome it.”

A “fear of commitment” is a feeling of worry and anxiety when you think about, in this case, spending your entire life with another person. You might decide that you are too afraid to get married, to be in a long-term romantic relationship. That’s a fear of commitment. The word “commitment” comes from the verb “to commit,” which means to promise to do something, to agree to do something. A fear of commitment would be the opposite – that you don’t want to commit to anyone. Iris thinks that she and Alex can help Jerry to overcome his fear of commitment.

“To overcome” (overcome) means to deal with a difficult problem or to solve a difficult problem, especially after a very long time of being challenged by the problem. There was a famous song of the civil rights movement in the 1960s in the United States, “We Shall Overcome,” meaning we will eventually solve this problem. We will eventually be able to, in the case of the African-American community in the United States, be free of the discrimination that they were experiencing at that time.

But the verb “to overcome” can be used in any circumstance where you have a very difficult situation, one that is perhaps long-lasting, where you eventually succeed. You solve the problem or get over the problem. Alex says, “Maybe he just wants to be left alone by meddling neighbors and ladies on the prowl.” “Meddling” (meddling) means being involved in other people’s private affairs, especially when those people don’t want this person involved in their affairs. “To



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meddle” as a verb means to get involved in things, especially private matters that don’t concern you, that you shouldn’t be involved in.

That’s what Alex thinks Iris is doing. He’s meddling in the personal affairs of Jerry. He says that he thinks Jerry “just wants to be left alone by meddling neighbors,” meaning he doesn’t want people bothering him in this way. He also wants to be left alone by “ladies on the prowl” (prowl). “To be on the prowl” means to be looking for something, searching for something. It’s often used in the dating world, if we could call it that, to refer to someone who is looking for a romantic or sexual partner.

Alex says, “There are many benefits” – many good things – “to remaining a bachelor.” Iris says, “You mean living a celibate and empty life?” “Celibate” (celibate) means deciding not to have sexual relations with another person – often, but not always, for religious reasons. Iris obviously thinks that being celibate means having an empty life. This is rather a prejudiced opinion on Iris’s part, but I suppose some people do think that.

Alex says, “You’re making too many assumptions.” “Assumptions” (assumptions) are things that you believe to be true even though you often don’t have any proof or evidence that they are true. Alex says, “You don’t know the first thing about his life.” “To not know the first thing” about someone is to be completely unfamiliar with someone or something. I could say, “I don’t know the first thing about repairing or fixing my computer.” I don’t know what to do. I’m completely ignorant. That would be a true statement.

Alex says, “In many ways, a bachelor’s life is idyllic.” “Idyllic” (idyllic) means perfect, very happy, enjoyable. To say the bachelor life is “idyllic” is to describe it as though it were the best situation you could be in, and that’s what Alex is saying. Iris is puzzled. She doesn’t agree. She says, “How can you say that?” meaning “How is it possible for you to think that way? What are your reasons for thinking that way?”

Alex says, “Would any bachelor have to have this conversation with anyone, ever?” What Alex is saying here in the last line of the dialogue is that the very fact that he has to have this conversation with his wife is an indication of the good side of being a bachelor – in other words, he wouldn’t have to argue with his wife if he were a bachelor, and bachelors don’t have to argue with anyone because they don’t have anyone to argue with. In some ways, Alex is perhaps making a joke here, since he and Iris are married.

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



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Iris: How can you say that?

Alex: Would any bachelor have to have this conversation with anyone, ever?

[end of dialogue]

You can overcome your difficulties with English by listening to the wonderful scripts by our wonderful scriptwriter, Dr. Lucy Tse.

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

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