

## Chatterbox #189 – Safety

### Episode description

As many wonderful things as there are in the world, there are also many dangers. In this episode, Andrew and Suzanne have a conversation about an interesting topic: safety. But don't worry: It's safe to jump the gun and start listening right away!

### Expressions included in the study guide

- A close call
- To jump the gun
- To ruffle (someone's) feathers
- (Someone's) bark is worse than their bite
- No-man's-land



## Transcript

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Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript.

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Andrew: Hey, everybody. My name's Andrew.

Suzanne: Hey, guys. I'm Suzanne.

Andrew: And we're back with another Culips episode.

Suzanne!

Suzanne: Yeah! Hi Andrew.

Andrew: How are you?

Suzanne: I'm good. I just had **a close call**.

Andrew: Yeah, what happened? Can you tell everybody what just happened?

Suzanne: Yeah. I did the opposite of **jumping the gun**. I almost missed the recycling guys. I heard the recycling coming just as we were going to start recording, and I saw that I didn't put the recycling outside yet so I had to grab it and run there, downstairs. And the guy was already past my house so I had to beg him to come back and take my recycling, and he did!

Andrew: Did he back his truck up for you or did he just come down to meet you, or what happened?

Suzanne: You know, I was really ... I lucked out because the truck was right in front of my house.

Andrew: Hmm.

Suzanne: And so he was already past my house. He had walked past but the truck was right in front so it made it easier for him. Phew! I was just gonna put it in myself. I've never done it before but I almost did.

Andrew: That was **a close call** but ...

Suzanne: It all worked out in the end.

Andrew: It all worked out in the end, oh yeah. Suzanne, today we're going to do a Chatterbox episode, and Chatterbox episodes are where we give the opportunity to eavesdrop on a totally natural conversation. We talk about an

interesting subject using totally natural language. This is just the way we talk in our everyday lives.

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: And today's topic is safety. Safety, OK? It's a very big topic and I'm interested to see where this conversation will go.

Suzanne: Mmhmm.

Andrew: Well, let's kick things off with just a general question about safety. When you hear this word, safety, what do you think of?

Suzanne: Hmm, when I hear the word safety I think of like taking precaution or, this is gonna sound stupid, but I think of like a first aid kit.

Andrew: Yup.

Suzanne: Or making sure I have everything I need for my camping trip. That's the first thing that comes into my mind.

Andrew: Mmhmm.

Suzanne: Like being a Girl Scout or something, you know?

Andrew: Ah, interesting. Being prepared for an emergency.

Suzanne: Yeah. And I have to say, after hearing myself say that, I feel kind of lucky that that's what I think about, because I know that many people around the world, many children in fact, don't feel a sense of safety in their everyday lives.

Andrew: Mmhmm.

Suzanne: And I think it's a luxury to have your mind go to a camping trip instead of, you know, walking outside and feeling unsafe or safe.

Andrew: Yeah.

Suzanne: So I would consider myself lucky about that.

Andrew: I would have to agree with you there. I think we're very lucky to live in safe places. And just like you said, this is a luxury unfortunately that many people don't have.

Suzanne: Mmhmm.

- Andrew: You know, I was speaking with a friend of mine recently, who now lives in Canada but he is originally from Brazil. And he was telling me that one of the greatest things about Canada, in his opinion, is that he feels safe in Canada, and that in Brazil he didn't feel safe. And this got me thinking about this topic of safety, and this is actually why we're recording it right now, this episode.
- Suzanne: Yeah, wow.
- Andrew: And, yeah, it's interesting to think about. And when I think of safety in Canada, I would say that it has a high level of safety, but it's not perfect. There still can be some dangerous situations.
- Suzanne: Yeah, I agree. It's not as isolated as one would think, you know? Especially now in our current political climate and things like ... Um, between the US and Canada and stuff.
- Andrew: Mmhmm.
- Suzanne: There's a lot of conflicting beliefs and conflicting perspectives, and so sometimes people threaten that safety. Because I think Canada has a reputation for being neutral and welcoming and more kind, and sometimes people want **to ruffle the feathers** or come in and cause some trouble, just for no reason. Just to, you know break up that perspective. I'm speaking very broadly here, if that makes sense.
- Andrew: Mmhmm, mmhmm.
- Suzanne: Not in a specific way. It's really interesting. I remember when I lived in New York City during September 11th in 2001.
- Andrew: Right.
- Suzanne: I had grown up in New York City and I never felt unsafe there, actually. Many people might be surprised, but I never felt unsafe. I knew how to handle myself there.
- Andrew: OK.
- Suzanne: So I felt really safe, and it was the first time where, because I'm, you know, like I said I come from a background of privilege, a background where I have never been in really threatening situations or climates of ... You know, certain countries maybe have different issues going on. I've been lucky in that way, that I've been in safe environments and homes. And that day was the first time I felt not safe, you know?
- Andrew: Right.

- Suzanne: Like it was the first time that I realized, wow! OK, anything can happen, anywhere.
- Andrew: Mmhmm, mmhmm.
- Suzanne: You know, that you have to just be aware that you're not always in control of the situation.
- Andrew: Yeah. I mean now that you mention it, I don't think I've ever felt unsafe like that. And, yeah, reflecting upon that, I have to acknowledge that I'm so lucky. It's really a privilege to grow up so sheltered.
- Suzanne: Yeah, and to feel that your basic human needs are met.
- Andrew: Mmhmm?
- Suzanne: And you're not threatened, you know? I think we take it for granted because it's something we kind of rely on. You know, we're used to it, and then the minute it's taken away it's like what? We've never had the experience of going from somewhere so unsafe to somewhere super safe, maybe like your friend.
- But you recently moved from Canada to Korea. Well it's been over ... About a year, right? Over a year?
- Andrew: Just a year ago, yeah.
- Suzanne: How do you feel living in Korea, as opposed to in Canada?
- Andrew: That's a good question. And I have to say that, although there is a really scary country to the north of us, North Korea, I'm not really scared of North Korea. Like I feel they're **more bark than bite**.
- Suzanne: Yeah.
- Andrew: And I think a lot of people think that way too. But we have to remember that they're a serious threat, but in general here I feel very, very, very safe. I don't think I've felt threatened or in danger even once. And I would have to say that, overall, my impression of Korea is that it's a very safe country, at least for me.
- Suzanne: Huh, that's really great to feel that, yeah.
- Andrew: Yeah, I mean I feel that Canada is also a safe country, but sometimes in Canada, you know, if you're in a big city, Toronto or Vancouver, and you're walking home at night and maybe there's a group of guys up ahead, I wouldn't say that I'm really scared, but my spidey senses are tingling, right? I'm aware of the situation. I'm being alert because you just never know, and

in the back of your mind you always think of the worst-case scenario. So maybe in that situation I'd cross the street.

One thing that I do, which is maybe something I should avoid doing, is I walk with my headphones in so I can't hear. But in that situation, I'll turn my music off so I can use my ears to guide me.

Suzanne: It's true. I do the same thing and I think that's not always the smartest thing, is to keep those headphones in.

Andrew: But we gotta have our tunes, come on.

Suzanne: I know, or our podcasts.

Andrew: Yeah.

Suzanne: Hello.

Andrew: Suzanne, that is an interesting point, though, about things that you do, precautions that you take to stay safe.

Suzanne: Mmhmm.

Andrew: What do you do to stay safe? Are there any special precautions that you take?

Suzanne: Hmm, well here in Canada, like you said, it's pretty safe. But the precautions I guess I take ... I have a dog, so when I walk him I have to be conscious of my surroundings more than when I'm alone, for example.

Andrew: Mmhmm.

Suzanne: So I'm more alert when I'm walking with my dog because maybe there are weird people around or maybe there's another dog that's maybe a little more vicious. Or maybe my dog's trying to walk across the street and it's a red light, so I have to be more alert and cautious for his safety. Sometimes I get nervous leaving him in front of a store and tying him up, because sometimes people here can steal dogs. And my dog is really cute, so I get nervous and I try to only bring him to certain places that have a more concealed area for him so he's not out on the middle of the street, in the corner.

But I mean these again are really small things. Like I said, from a privileged perspective, you know? Like I don't have to worry about shootings or bombs or something in front of my house. We were at school the other day and I was doing a pronunciation workshop, and we had a bomb threat.

Andrew: Mmhmm.

Suzanne: So we had to evacuate the room, and one of the students said, “Do we really have to go? I’m really enjoying this.” And I said, “Uh, yeah. We do. We have to listen to the authorities because something could be dangerous.” So we cleaned up quickly and we all met at another location just to make sure everyone was safe, and counted everybody and said, “OK, we’ll reschedule the workshop.”

And that was good because we made sure everyone was OK and got out safely. And so it’s really small things, like having a plan, being able to keep calm under situations that might be a little scary. You know, we were travelling, camping, and my boyfriend, Olivier, he broke his arm and we were in the middle of Gaspésie, so like out ... Like by Gaspé actually, like really far northeast in Quebec.

Andrew: In **no-man’s-land**.

Suzanne: Yeah. So I had to stay calm and drive the car to the hospital and ... You know, in those moments it’s important, I think, to take a breath, think quickly and have a plan, and make the best choice for everyone in your group, and then learn from it, you know? And then say, “OK, I wouldn’t do this. I would do this. Maybe even next time I would do that.”

Andrew: Yeah.

Suzanne: You know? I think I’m being kind of broad, but yeah.

Andrew: I think I definitely agree in a moment of danger, like a bomb threat or a broken arm, you have to remain calm, right? This is very, very important. And Sue, I should mention ...

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: You brought up the bomb threat. Now people are going to hear this and go, “What? A bomb threat in Canada?” We have to stress that this is not an everyday occurrence, is it?

Suzanne: Not at all. This is something ... Was very shocking and weird, especially at our school. At our school is a very multicultural, really accepting so many different people from all over the world with different languages and backgrounds. And everyone is very accepting, right? In our classes, we’ve had so many different kinds of people, and you learn so much from everyone and it becomes such an amazing experience to be able to learn from each other’s differences.

And that’s really the general feeling here in Canada. It’s very, very accepting. And so that’s why this was so strange and out of the blue and out of the ordinary. It was shocking, yeah.

- Andrew: Because this bomb threat was racially and religiously motivated.
- Suzanne: Right.
- Andrew: It targeted a certain group of people, and this was really, really shocking and scary.
- Suzanne: Yeah, because this is something that is really not the case in Montreal, in Canada, and also at our school. Our school is very culturally diverse, religiously diverse, and it's great, you know? It's one of my favourite things.
- Andrew: Mmhmm.
- Suzanne: And so it was very shocking that someone would target a culture or something like that because of a religious reason. So yeah ... No, this was very odd. I don't think this has ever happened at Concordia before, yeah.
- Andrew: No. Anyways, we're lucky it was just a threat and not the real deal. Suzanne, I have one more thing to ask you about.
- Suzanne: Mmhmm?
- Andrew: Many of my Korean friends, when they visit Canada, they're actually a little bit nervous. They feel like it's an unsafe place.
- Suzanne: Hmm.
- Andrew: I think why this is is because Korea is so safe. But you know, I think also when you visit a foreign country, you're always a little bit apprehensive, right? You don't know exactly what it's going to be like.
- Suzanne: Yeah.
- Andrew: And so what I would like to know is, as a foreigner visiting Canada from a different country, what are some precautions that you could take? Do you have any tips for travellers in Canada? Things they can do to stay safe.
- Suzanne: Yeah. I think it's important to ... When you're travelling, this is not so much when you're living here, but when you're travelling it's good to keep your passport and your money in a safe place close, like on your body.
- Andrew: Mmhmm.
- Suzanne: People are not really stealing things like that as they are in maybe bigger, like really big cities like New York City or a bigger ... You know, like in Paris, they do that, for example. They have pickpockets.
- Andrew: Come on, Paris. Those Paris pickpockets.



Suzanne: Come on, Paris. What's up with that?

Andrew: Yeah.

Suzanne: But it's good to just have it so that you know where it is, right?

Andrew: Yes.

Suzanne: And you don't flash money everywhere.

Andrew: Exactly.

Suzanne: You just take what you need and that's it. You know, use your hotel safe in your room, if you have one. And have a plan of where you're going, first, before you kind of set out for the day. Know which trains or metros or buses you need to take.

Andrew: Mmhmm.

Suzanne: Maybe have a plan and ask people beforehand what's a good lunch place. You know, have kind of a general plan so that when you are on your journey for the day, you know where you're going. You're not aimlessly walking around, because that makes you vulnerable, and it's always good to trust your instincts, I think.

Andrew: Mmhmm.

Suzanne: You don't have to be scared. It's really safe here. Like my experience from living in New York, it's ... Montreal is so safe. But it's important to ... I think people have a tendency when they're travelling to expect it to be just like where they live, and they expect things to be just like where they live, like restaurants to act the same way, or cabs to be the same.

And it's important to know that it's not going to be the same as where you're from. And be open to finding out how it's going to be, you know?

Andrew: Yeah.

Suzanne: Like asking people like us on the Facebook page or travel agents or books or maybe your hotel information desk, to say, "Hey, how does it work with the cabs? Can I just go out there? Do I need to make a phone call? Do you have a number for a cab company or an Uber or a Lyft?" Or, "How much do I tip? What should I do? Can I trust this?" And ask before you go so that you have a plan. I think that's the best way for anyone to travel, you know, in big cities I would say, for sure.

- Andrew: Mmhmm. I would say, yeah, be prepared, be careful at night. Night is ... If anything is gonna go down, it's probably gonna go down at night. Go with a friend. Don't walk alone.
- Suzanne: Yeah.
- Andrew: Yeah, just don't wander alone at night and you should be fine. I mean, you'll be fine. Canada is safe. Don't worry, come visit.
- Suzanne: Yeah, yeah. It's really safe and there are so many great festivals and concerts and things all the time. So it's a really fun place to visit.
- Andrew: Suzanne, just before we wrap this up, you used a really interesting expression about 2 minutes ago when you said that people shouldn't flash cash.
- Suzanne: Yeah.
- Andrew: Flash cash around. What does this mean, to flash cash around? Oh, that one's fun to say.
- Suzanne: Well, flash cash?
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Suzanne: I think ... Well for me, you know, when you go to an ATM, sometimes ATMs are in a little vestibule or sometimes they're in ... Like right outside the building so you're not really protected. And you're taking out money, and sometimes people could be looking over your shoulder at your PIN number or something like that, so it's important to sort of block ... You know, be cautious of that.
- Then when you take your money, you just don't want to take it all out at once and count it right there on the street. Just take it, fold it, put it right back in the pocket. You know, just be ... And don't take it out until maybe you're at the restaurant and you're sitting down and you can count it in a more private situation. You just don't want to make all the money you have visible to the world.
- Andrew: Right.
- Suzanne: Then what you're doing is like advertising that you have all this money.
- Andrew: Exactly. I mean, and this can even be carried over to the clothes you wear, the accessories that you use. If it looks like you're rich, then you're kind of a target perhaps.
- Suzanne: Yeah, you're putting a target on your back. Hey, I got some money!

- Andrew: So that's it for us today. Just before we let you go, I'd like to remind you to visit our website, [Culips.com](http://Culips.com). Look into becoming a Culips member if you're interested in taking your English to the next level. We offer our members full transcripts, detailed vocabulary explanations, and quizzes for every episode. And this is a great way to increase your English fluency and support the show at the same time. We really do rely on the support of our members to keep us going. So thank you to the Culips members a bunch. We do appreciate your support.
- Suzanne: Yeah. And you can also find us on Facebook at [Facebook.com/CulipsPodcast](https://Facebook.com/CulipsPodcast).
- Andrew: Definitely. Hey, guys, thanks again for listening and we'll be back soon with another Culips episode. Talk to you soon. Bye.
- Suzanne: Bye.

## Detailed Explanations

### A close call

Have you ever had an experience where something bad almost happened, but you managed to avoid it at the last second? This situation is called **a close call**!

In this episode, Suzanne mentions that she had **a close call** taking out her recycling. She says that she almost put her recycling out too late for it to be taken away. Because she narrowly avoided a bad situation, missing the recycling collection, this is an example of **a close call**.

**A close call** can be used to describe avoiding a negative situation, whether it's dangerous or simply unpleasant. So, whether the bad event you avoided was a car accident or a missed phone call, you can say you had **a close call**.

Here are a couple more examples with **a close call**:

Judy:	Hey, Sam, it smells really good in here! Were you baking something?
Sam:	Yes, I made cookies! I'm so relieved they turned out OK.
Judy:	Why are you relieved? Did something happen while you were baking?
Sam:	I almost messed the cookies up! I put them on the baking sheet and was just about to pop them in the oven when I realized that I forgot to put in baking powder.
Judy:	Sounds like you had <b>a close call</b> with those cookies!
Sam:	No kidding!

Heather:	Oh man, I had <b>a close call</b> at the hairdresser today.
Paul:	What happened?
Heather:	I told my hairdresser I didn't want more than 3 inches cut off, but she thought I said "more than 3 inches." She almost cut off half my hair before I stopped her!

## To jump the gun

**To jump the gun** is an expression that comes from running races. A shot from a gun has traditionally been used to signal the start of a race. When a runner starts too soon, before the gun is fired, this is called **jumping the gun**.

So, when someone uses the expression **to jump the gun** to describe someone's behaviour, it means the person has done something too soon. For example, in this episode Suzanne says that, in her close call, she did the opposite of **jumping the gun**. In other words, instead of doing something too soon, she did something too late.

You can use **to jump the gun** to describe a situation when someone takes an action before the correct time.

Here are a couple more examples with **to jump the gun**:

Jonathan:	Do you want to get lunch today?
Rebecca:	Sounds good to me. Where were you thinking?
Jonathan:	We could go to the sandwich place, or maybe try the new Indian restaurant down the street.
Rebecca:	Let's try the Indian place! I'll go get my coat.
Jonathan:	Whoa, don't <b>jump the gun</b> . It's only 10:30! It's way too early for lunch.
Rebecca:	Oh, you're right. I guess I just got excited.

Joe:	How was your weekend?
Polly:	It was a weird weekend, for sure. You know Kevin, the guy I've been dating?
Joe:	Yeah, I met him a few weeks back. He seemed cool!
Polly:	Well, he asked me to move in with him. We've only been dating for 2 months!
Joe:	Whoa! That's way too soon to move in together. He really <b>jumped the gun</b> there.

## To ruffle (someone's) feathers

**To ruffle (someone's) feathers** is an informal expression that means to cause someone to become upset.

In this episode, Suzanne mentions that there are people who take actions just to **ruffle feathers**. In other words, some people do negative things to upset or offend other people.

When you **ruffle someone's feathers**, you do something that makes them feel a negative emotion related to anger. So, if you annoy, offend, irritate, or frustrate someone, you can say you **ruffled their feathers**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to ruffle (someone's) feathers**:

Laura:	How do you like your new apartment?
Kyle:	It's good, but I think I <b>ruffled my roommate's feathers</b> the other day.
Laura:	What did you do?
Kyle:	I forgot to put the lid on the kettle, so it never stopped boiling. I think I left it like that for half an hour.
Laura:	Oh no! So she was upset?
Kyle:	Yeah, and she's been pretty annoyed with me since then.

Carol:	One of my friends is angry with me and I don't know how to deal with it!
Ben:	What happened?
Carol:	Nothing, really. I just couldn't make it to a lunch date last week and she's upset with me.
Ben:	It sounds like you should be upset with her! She's not being very understanding.
Carol:	I know. I just hate <b>ruffling people's feathers</b> .

## (Someone's) bark is worse than their bite

Do you know anyone who speaks in a harsh or aggressive way, but doesn't behave in a mean or aggressive way towards other people? You can describe them with the expression **their bark is worse than their bite**.

So, when someone is not as unpleasant as they sound or appear to be, we say that **their bark is worse than their bite**. This means that, while they may seem to be a mean or aggressive person, they are much nicer than that.

**Someone's bark is worse than their bite** is not the only form this expression takes. For example, in this episode Andrew says that North Korea is "**more bark than bite**." In other words, they sound more dangerous and aggressive than they actually are. You might also hear the phrase "**all bark, no bite**." This is another alternate form of the main expression, meaning that, while someone might say or threaten aggressive actions, they will never actually do the things they talk about.

Here are a couple more examples with **(someone's) bark is worse than their bite**:

Harold:	How are you settling into the new job, Josie?
Josie:	Pretty well, thanks! I don't know about our boss, though.
Harold:	Yes, she can be difficult to deal with at times.
Josie:	She seems really mean! I asked if I could leave a few minutes early to get to a doctor's appointment and she told me it was OK, but that I should be careful not to leave early too often or I might be fired!
Harold:	Oh, don't worry about that. <b>Her bark is worse than her bite</b> . She's actually quite understanding. She just talks that way because she doesn't want people to think they can get away with bad behaviour.
Josie:	That's good to know. Thanks!

Griffin:	Did you hear our downstairs neighbour yelling at the garbage collectors? He said that if they got trash on the lawn one more time, he'd beat them up!
Sherri:	The old guy downstairs? He's <b>all bark, no bite</b> . He's just a cranky old man. He would never actually attack someone.
Griffin:	I sure hope not! Either way, I'm going to try not to make him angry with me—he seems dangerous.

## No-man's-land

**No-man's-land** is a noun that has two meanings. The first meaning refers to area of land that is owned and/or controlled by no one, such as the land between the borders of two countries. This definition is used most often to describe uncontrolled areas during a war: when there is an area that technically belongs to no one, like the land between two fighting armies, it is called **no-man's-land**.

The second meaning of **no-man's-land** is an area that is unsuitable for people to live in. For example, places that people can't live in, like deep in the wilderness, can be called **no-man's-lands**. People will also use **no-man's-land** to refer to places where they personally would not like to live. A person who likes living in the city might say that a very small town is a **no-man's-land**, while a person from the country might say that a big city is a **no-man's-land**.

In this episode, Suzanne talks about camping in the Gaspésie, and Andrew calls the area a **no-man's-land**. He calls this area **no-man's-land** because Suzanne mentions that they were in the wilderness and very far away from areas where people live.

So, you can use **no-man's-land** to refer to a place that is either uncontrolled or not suitable to live in.

Here are a couple more examples with **no-man's-land**:

Hannah:	How was your road trip?
Nick:	It was great, except when we got stuck in <b>no-man's-land</b> with a flat tire.
Hannah:	Oh no, that sounds awful!
Nick:	It was. We were in the middle of nowhere: no cell reception, no towns. Thankfully, someone who knew how to change a tire stopped and helped us out.
Hannah:	Lucky!

Joanne:	I just got an offer for a really cool job, but I would have to move way up north.
Charles:	Up into the country? No way, don't take it! You can't go live in <b>no-man's-land</b> !



## Quiz

**1. An expression for taking an action too early is:**

- a) to toast the bun
- b) to jump the gun
- c) to kill the moment
- d) to jump the shark

**2. What is a term for an area that is uncontrolled, unowned, or unsuitable to live in?**

- a) no-holds-barred
- b) the wilderness
- c) no-man's-land
- d) middle of nowhere

**3. True or false: A close call is a situation where something bad might have happened, but it was avoided by planning ahead of time.**

- a) true
- b) false

**4. When someone's bark is worse than their bite, they are \_\_\_\_\_ than they seem.**

- a) stranger
- b) nicer
- c) happier
- d) meaner

**5. To ruffle someone's feathers is to \_\_\_\_\_ them.**

- a) annoy
- b) upset
- c) irritate
- d) all of the above

## Quiz Answers

1.b    2.c    3.b    4.b    5.d

### Episode credits

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