

## Brains On (APM) | Smash Boom Best Axolotls vs. Flamingos 01GPH3J7JM3WA499GZ0JRVGXR

ANNOUNCER: From the brains behind *BrainsOn*, it's *Smash, Boom, Best*.

- The show for  
people with  
big opinions.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Hi, I'm Molly Bloom, and this is *Smash, Boom, Best*, the show where we take two things, smash them together, and ask you to decide which one is best. Today's debate is chock full of zoological zingers, this ani-melee features a pink bird with a bent bill and an amphibian with frilly gills. Give it up fir flamingos versus axolotls.

[SPLASH]

[SQUAWKING]

In one corner, we've got comedian and writer Katie McVeigh defending flamingos.

**KATIE MCVEIGH:** [IMITATING FLAMINGO SQUAWK]

You'll be pink with envy when you hear about this bird.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** [LAUGHS] And in the other, we've got stand-up comedian, puppeteer, and podcaster Tim Platt ready to fight for team axolotls.

**TIM PLATT:** Yeah, this amphibians gotl all the qualities you could ax for, and I ask for those qualities a lotl.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** [LAUGHS] And here to judge it all, we've got Ruby from New York City. She is writing a book, *Plays the Banjo*, and has a sizeable suitcase collection. Hi, Ruby!

**RUBY:** Hi.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** I would love to know more about the suitcase collection. How did it start?

**RUBY:** This is a good story. So I was in an antique store, and an old lady brought in this like huge suitcase. It's like twice her size, beautiful. It's got these like stickers from everywhere on it. It's big and brown. And she takes it to the front desk and is like, how much can I get for it? And they're like, we need this much.

And she's like, I need more. I need money for the suitcase. I don't know. It was my husband's. He was a traveling salesman. And I was like, how much are you trying to get for that suitcase because I want that suitcase? And she's like, would you love it? And I'm like I would love it. I would love it forever. Really? Do you mean it? And I'm like, yeah. And she gives it to me for free.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Aww.

[GASPS]

**RUBY:** I know right?

**MOLLY** That's a good story.

**BLOOM:**

**RUBY:** Yeah, Yeah.

**MOLLY** So do you still love the suitcase?

**BLOOM:**

**RUBY:** Oh, I love it so much.

**KATIE** Yeah.

**MCVEIGH:**

**MOLLY** Do you use it?

**BLOOM:**

**RUBY:** I mean, it's so heavy, and--

**TIM PLATT:** [LAUGHS]

**RUBY:** --I don't travel that much, but I use it when I can and keep it in good condition. And I oil it and everything.

**KATIE** You oil it?

**MCVEIGH:**

**MOLLY** Oh really?

**BLOOM:**

**KATIE** Wow.

**MCVEIGH:**

**RUBY:** I do.

**MOLLY** [LAUGHS] Will Ruby favor flamingos or will she be awed by axolotls? Only she can tell. Before we get into this  
**BLOOM:** debate, let's review the rules of the game.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Round 1 is the Declaration of Greatness. In this round, debaters present fact-filled arguments in favor of their side, and they each have 30 seconds to rebut their opponent's statements. Then we've got the Micro Round where each team will present a creative response to a prompt they received in advance. Round 3 is the Sneak Attack, where our debaters will have to respond to an improv challenge on the spot. And to wrap it all up, we've got the Final Six, where each team will have just six words to sum up the glory of their side.

Our judge Ruby will award two points in the first round, one for her favorite rebuttal, the other for the declaration she liked best. Then she'll award one point in each round after that, but she'll keep her decisions top secret until the end of the debate. Listeners, we want you to judge, too. Mark down your points as you listen. At the end of the show, head to our website [smashboom.org](http://smashboom.org) and vote for whichever team you think won.

OK, Tim, Katie, and Ruby, are you ready?

**TIM PLATT:** Yes.

**RUBY:** Yes.

**KATIE** Never been readier.

**MCVEIGH:**

**MOLLY** Then it's time for the--

**BLOOM:**

**ANNOUNCER:**Declaration of Greatness.

**MOLLY** We flipped a coin, and Katie, you're up first. Tell us why flamingos are fabulous.

**BLOOM:**

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**KATIE** (SINGING) Katie likes staying home. She's a human with hair. Freddy is a flamingo with lots of flair. He's a lawn ornament, who came to life one night. Now, the two are roommates, and it feels just right. It's Katie and Freddy.

**MCVEIGH:**

[APPLAUSE AND WHISTLING]

[DOOR OPENS]

**FREDDY:** Oh, Katie, I'm home.

**KATIE** Is that my favorite flamingo/roommate/bestie?

**MCVEIGH:**

**FREDDY:** Check, check, and check.

[LAUGHTER]

Katie, you were in this exact chair when I left. Did you even move?

**KATIE** Yeah. I totally got up. How else was I supposed to get the remote?

**MCVEIGH:**

[LAUGHTER]

**FREDDY:** Katie, you got to live a little. In fact, I think it's time you live like a flamingo for a day. Get up and get dressed, something pink.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**KATIE** OK, I'm dressed. Are you happy?

**MCVEIGH:**

**FREDDY:** Elated. Now, if you could, just stand on one foot.

**KATIE** Ugh, Freddy, you know I failed at a circus school.

**MCVEIGH:**

[LAUGHTER]

**FREDDY:** It's easy like this.

[BOING]

**KATIE** Ah! It looks like your knee is bent backwards. I don't think I can bend that way. Ugh.

**MCVEIGH:**

[GROANING]

**FREDDY:** I know it looks like my knee, but it's actually my ankle. My real knee is tucked underneath my feathers and helps lock my leg into place. It's pretty stable. We can even sleep on one foot.

**KATIE** Woo! All this balancing is making me hungry.

**MCVEIGH:**

**FREDDY:** Say less. I have my flamingo favorite, brined shrimp cocktail.

[OPENS REFRIGERATOR DOOR]

Let's see. Hmm. Voila. For us flamingos, you really are what you eat. And these teeny tiny shrimps are how we get our iconic orange and pink color.

**KATIE** Wait. You're not naturally pink?

**MCVEIGH:**

**FREDDY:** Flamingos are actually gray.

**KATIE** Oh, what in the what?

**MCVEIGH:**

**FREDDY:** Well, we eat a lot of brined shrimp, which contains these pigments called carotenoids, the same stuff that makes carrots and sweet potatoes orange. Our bodies take the pinkish pigment and stick them in our feathers and beaks. And that's how we get our rosy complexion. So eat up!

[COUGHS]

**KATIE** Got anything to drink?

**MCVEIGH:**

**FREDDY:** Sure, you want saltwater or near boiling hot water?

[LAUGHTER]

**KATIE** Neither.

**MCVEIGH:**

**FREDDY:** Oh yeah. I forgot. Humans aren't as tough as flamingos. We may look frivolous and fun, but we're also survivors. We've been known to stay in water so toxic and caustic it would burn human skin. We can drink saltwater because we have salt filtering glands. We can also drink from super hot geysers.

**KATIE** Why on BBC's *Planet Earth*, would I want to live in salty lakes and drink scalding water?

**MCVEIGH:**

**FREDDY:** Those extreme environments keep other animals away so they don't hunt us or take our food, which is important because we have a lot of mouths to feed, unlike those extreme loners axolotls, we flock together by the hundreds or even thousands. And get this. A group of flamingos is called a flamboyance.

**KATIE** I love it, so festive!

**MCVEIGH:**

[DOORBELL RINGS]

**FREDDY:** Speaking of I invited some friends over for karaoke.

[DOOR OPENS]

Francesca! Fernando! Come on in. This is Katie.

**KATIE** Hi.

**MCVEIGH:**

**FERNANDO:** Oh yeah, the human. We've heard so much about you.

**FRANCESCA:** Pleased to beak you. You know, we're not all that different from humans really. We mate for life. We have friend groups, even enemies.

**FERNANDO:** Like Gerald,

**KATIE** Ugh, Gerald is the worst. He's always quote, unquote, "forgetting" his wallet when we go out to eat. He says he left

**MCVEIGH:** it in his other pair of pants. He's never even worn pants!

[LAUGHTER]

**FRANCESCA:** So who's ready to karaoke?

**KATIE** Me.

**MCVEIGH:**

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**FERNANDO:** Wow, Katie. I would have never guessed you're a baritone.

**KATIE** (DEEP VOICE) What can I say? I've got range.

**MCVEIGH:**

[COUGHS]

[LAUGHTER]

And Freddie, thanks for getting me to spread my wings, pun intended. Flamingos are so cool. They're super social, totally tough, and I love how you embrace your quirks. You're iconic. You're funky. You're simply flamingo.

[APPLAUSE]

(SINGING) Katie stood on her leg too long. Now, she's got a limp, but she learned a lot and even tried some shrimp. It's Katie and Freddy.

My 20s were wild.

[LAUGHTER]

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Putting the competition in sitcom there. Ruby, what stood out to you about Katie's declaration of greatness?

**RUBY:** I liked the come alive lawn ornament, and I liked the diversity. It's so beautiful to see so many different shades of pink and orange.

**TIM PLATT:** Mm.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Very true. All right, Tim, it's time for your rebuttal. You've got 30 seconds to prove that flamingos are salmon suited suckers, and your time--

**KATIE MCVEIGH:** [GASPS]

**MOLLY BLOOM:** --starts now.

**TIM PLATT:** Wow, weird choice to lead with they can stand on one foot. That's like an elephant leading with having wrinkled knees. You know, I hear that you're saying that they borrow their pink coloration from their food, and that's something we're supposed to think is cool? Yeah, the only thing that's cool about them is their color, and they got it from a food. That's like if I got being funny from eating Fozzie Bear. And you know what? I don't think the flamingos need to live in toxic water to keep other animals away. I think their personality already does that job.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** And time.

**KATIE MCVEIGH:** [GASPS]

Wow. At least, the flamingos have a personality, Tim. Ever think about that?

**TIM PLATT:** Well, the personality my animal has, ooh, they are spreading around the world and getting likes and getting likes on platforms for their personality.

**RUBY:** All right, Tim.

**KATIE** OK.

**MCVEIGH:**

**TIM PLATT:** Yeah, you know the most important thing in the world? Likes on a platform.

[LAUGHTER]

**MOLLY** All right, Tim. It is your turn. Tell us why you think axolotls are the most awesome amphibians ever.

**BLOOM:**

**KATIE** Gladly.

**MCVEIGH:**

[WATER LAPPING]

So I've been traveling around Mexico City for a few weeks now on the quest to find the most powerful baby in the world.

[BABY CRIES]

Why do I care about finding the most powerful baby? Because I'm a power hungry guy. I've already collected the most powerful pogo stick--

[POGO SPRINGING]

--fart--

[FARTING]

--and guitar.

[GUITAR PLAYING]

So naturally, finding this powerful baby is next. And the only place I haven't looked is this lake, Lake Xochimilco.

**AXOLOTL:** Hey, buddy. Psst.

**TIM PLATT:** [GASPS]

**AXOLOTL:** I'm the baby you're looking for.

**TIM PLATT:** You're not a baby.

**AXOLOTL:** Yes, I am.

[CHUCKLING]

**TIM PLATT:** You are not. You're about 10 inches tall and grayish brown with a long tail, unblinking eyes, a feathery fringe around your face, and, aw, a cute little smile. You are cute like a baby.

[BLOWS RASPBERRY]

**AXOLOTL:** I know. I'm an axolotl, man. We're forever babies.

**TIM PLATT:** If you're a baby, why don't you talk like one?

**AXOLOTL:** You think babies can't talk like this? Hey, Dino. This guy thinks babies are all like goo goo ga ga.

**DINO:** Typical.

**AXOLOTL:** This is my stinker of a sibling. Dino Axolotl, this is.

**DINO:** You trying to eat my worms, Tim?

**AXOLOTL:** Dino always thinks everybody's trying to eat his worms. One time, he got so mad at me for eating worms that he wanted, he ate my entire arm.

**TIM PLATT:** [GASPS]

**DINO:** I believe in the right to tear arms.

**TIM PLATT:** Oh!

**AXOLOTL:** Don't look so shocked, Tim. It's an axolotl eat axolotl world out there.

**TIM PLATT:** But you have all your arms.

**AXOLOTL:** Because I grew it back. Just like Peter Pan, I won't grow up, but I will grow back. If needed, I can regrow all of my limbs, and my lungs, and my jaw, and my spine, even parts of my heart and brain, all without scarring. Want to see?

**TIM PLATT:** No, no, no, no, no, no, no. Relax a little. I believe you, but how do you do it?

**AXOLOTL:** Well, when a part of us goes missing, the cells near the injured site switch into grow mode! And we regrow the missing piece. Scientists haven't really figured out how yet, but it's partly because we're neotenic a.k.a. forever babies, which, let me tell you, has its perks. We don't have teeth, so I can suck up my food like a vacuum cleaner.

[WHIRS]

[SLURPS]

[CHEWS]

**DINO:** Ooh, I smell worms.

[SPLASH]

**TIM PLATT:** Bye, Dino.

**AXOLOTL:** Eh, he'll be back. Oh, did I mention that our genome a.k.a. all of the DNA that makes us who we are is 10 times more complicated than what you humans got? It's one of the biggest genomes ever sequenced! Bigger than a lion's genome, bigger than an elephant's, which means we're complicated and mysterious. Oh, and did I mention? We're gods.

**TIM PLATT:** I mean, you've already given me a lot of reasons to believe you're pretty powerful. But wait? Did you say gods?



**AXOLOTL:** Yeah. We're named after Xolotl, the fearsome Aztec god of lightning, deformities, fire, death, sickness, and misfortune.

[RUMBLING]

**TIM PLATT:** Yikes!

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**AXOLOTL:** As the story goes, at the beginning of the world, the sun and the moon would not move in the sky. So the gods decided to give up their lives to get the sun and the moon moving. Quetzalcoatl, the god of wind, was put in charge of rounding them up. But there was one god who didn't want to give up his life and infinite power. His name was Xolotl.

**XOLOTL:** G-g-g-- get me out of here!

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**AXOLOTL:** So he ran from the wind, hid in a cornfield, and disguised himself as a corn stalk, but the wind found him.

**XOLOTL:** Yikes! Time to axo-skedaddle!

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**AXOLOTL:** Next, he disguised himself as a double-leafed maguey plant, which looks like a spiky cactus, but the wind found him again.

**XOLOTL:** Ah! Gotta make a gutsy bust for it!

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**AXOLOTL:** Finally, he got to a lake, jumped in, and transformed into an axolotl.

[SPLASH]

And us, axolotls, we've never left because the water is magic. Most salamanders grow up and leave the water behind, but not us. . See this frilly fringe around my face? These are gills so I can breathe underwater and stay here forever. I do everything in the water, swimming, and dancing, and feeding, and dooby dooby doop.

**TIM PLATT:** Wow, baby face! You've got some moves.

[CHUCKLES]

**AXOLOTL:** Hey, thanks. That's our mating dance. We strut around in a circle with a lady like so.

[WATER LAPS]

Cha, cha, cha, da da da da ra. And then us males walk off, wagging our tails so the ladies'll follow. See?

[SPLASHING]

**TIM PLATT:** Do it again. I've got the most powerful guitar in the world with me. I'll play while you strut your stuff.

**AXOLOTL:** Oh, you got it.

[GUITAR PLAYING]

**TIM PLATT:** (SINGING) Down in old lake Xochimilco, forever babies do the Dosey Dosey Doe. These water dogs, they might be gods with frilly gills that they can regrow. The best place to see them is to go down to old lake Xochimilco, lake Xochimilco.

Dang, babyface, that dance might go viral.

**AXOLOTL:** Hey, your song was pretty cool, too. So do you believe me now?

**TIM PLATT:** Yeah. Axolotls are the most powerful babies in the world.

**MOLLY** That was a powerful declaration of greatness for those very powerful babies. Ruby, what stood out to you about  
**BLOOM:** Tim's declaration of greatness?

**RUBY:** I mean, they're godlike powerful babies with no teeth, and they are highly complicated is what I'm getting.

**MOLLY** A lot going on there.

**BLOOM:**

**RUBY:** I only read the Wikipedia page, and I didn't get any of that action. Wow.

**TIM PLATT:** That's one thing I love about the axolotl. There's always something more to learn about them. There's such a depth to their characterization, to the qualities that make them an individually exciting animal. When you learn one thing, there's always something different and unbelievable to find out about this incredible amphibian.

**MOLLY** All right, Katie, it's time for your rebuttal. You've got 30 seconds to show why axolotls are merely second class  
**BLOOM:** salamanders. And your time starts now.

**KATIE** All right, here's what I'll say. All right, a lot of people are saying that axolotls are interesting forever babies. I would  
**MCVEIGH:** argue they're vicious little weirdos who never left home. You know who's leaving home all the time? The flamingo. There's a flamingo named Pink Floyd. He has been on the run from a Kansas zoo for 17 years. Could an axolotl do that? No. They're just going to chew off the arm of their roommate and again, never leave home. I can't imagine eating my roommate's arm and then living with them for the rest of time. OK, thank you.

[LAUGHTER]

**TIM PLATT:** Whoa, nice.

[LAUGHTER]

**MOLLY** All right, Ruby, it is time to award some points. We want you to give one point for the Declaration of Greatness you  
**BLOOM:** liked best and one point for the best rebuttal. You get to decide what makes a winning argument. Did one side win you over with their wisdom or make you laugh at their logic? Award your points, but don't tell us who they're going to. Have you made your decision?

**RUBY:** Yeah, I have. Yeah, wow.

[BELL RINGS]

**MOLLY** Excellent. Tim and Katie, how are you feeling so far?

**BLOOM:**

**TIM PLATT:** I'm so grateful to be here. I'm so grateful just to be in the presence of spirited debate and dialogue.

**KATIE** I mean, it's good you don't have teeth as an axolotl, Tim, because you are doing a lot of sucking up.

**MCVEIGH:**

**TIM PLATT:** OK, OK. You know what? You know what? I'm going to get vicious. No, I would never do that. That was me pretending. I'm so happy to be here.

**KATIE** Here's what I'll say. The flamingo feels great. We're standing on one leg. We're walking backwards. We're living our lives.

**MCVEIGH:**

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Ka ka.

**MOLLY** All right, it's time for a quick break. You've got plenty of time to feed your pets, plants, or parents because--

**BLOOM:**

**RUBY:** We'll be right back with more *Smash Boom Best*.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**ANNOUNCER:** You're watching *State of Debate*, home to raging rhetoric and awe-inspiring argumentation.

**TODD** Hey ho, debate fans, Todd Douglas here with--

**DOUGLAS:**

**TAYLOR** Taylor Lincoln. I'm cooking up something really special, a whopping can of calling out logical fallacies.

**LINCOLN:**

**TODD** Logical fallacies are weak sauce arguments that make your debate bland and lacking in logical nutrition.

**DOUGLAS:**

**TAYLOR** That's right, and today, we're spicing it up by talking about the false dichotomy fallacy. That's when someone makes it seem like there are two choices when in fact, there are more choices.

**LINCOLN:**

**TODD** It's a bitter tasting tactic. Here, have a listen.

**DOUGLAS:**

**PASTA PETE:** Look here, Noodle Nelly, using a fork and spoon is the perfect way to pick up pasta. Spear then swirl. Spear then swirl. Chomp, chomp, chomp, chomp. Perfect pasta every time.

**NOODLE** Pasta Pete, set yourself to simmer because your argument is half cooked.

**NELLY:**

**PASTA PETE:** No, it's not. It's fully cooked. How else are you going to eat pasta? Fork and knife? Baha! As if. You can't swirl the long spaghettis with a knife.

**NOODLE** Hold the horseradish, Pete. That's not it.

**NELLY:**

**PASTA PETE:** You're either team fork and spoon or team fork and knife. And fork and spoon is obviously the only way to entertain eating your entire plate of pasta, Nelly. So there.

**NOODLE** Pasta Pete, you're making a false dichotomy here. There are tons of other ways to eat noodles like with your hands,

**NELLY:** with a spork, or my favorite, chopsticks. I can pick out the exact noodle I want to nibble on with a pair of chopsticks.

**PASTA PETE:** Oh, dang, you're right. I did do a dirty dichotomy there. My bad. Let me say sorry by sharing by fusilli. Eat up.

[CHEWING]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**TAYLOR** There you have it. Logical fallacies are the limp noodles of debate. Avoid them at all costs for a healthy, balanced

**LINCOLN:** argument.

**TODD** That's it for this one. See you next time on

**DOUGLAS:**

**TODD AND** *State of Debate.*

**TAYLOR:**

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**THEME** *Smash Boom Best.*

**SONG:**

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**MOLLY** You're listening to *Smash Boom Best*, I'm your host, Molly Bloom.

**BLOOM:**

**RUBY:** And I'm your judge Ruby.

**MOLLY** And we love getting debate suggestions from our listeners. Check out this epic idea we got from Hudson in Gretna,

**BLOOM:** Nebraska.

**HUDSON:** North Pole versus South Pole.

**RUBY:** What a cool idea for a debate.

**MOLLY** We'll check back with Hudson at the end of this episode to see which side he thinks should win.

**BLOOM:**

**RUBY:** And now, it's back to today's debate, flamingos versus axolotls.

**MOLLY** That's right, and it's time for round 2, the--

**BLOOM:**

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**ANNOUNCER:**Micro Round.

[DING]

**MOLLY** Today's micro round challenge is called Running for Mayor. Tim and Katie must deliver a speech to a city or town of their choosing about why their animal should be nominated for mayor. Katie went first last time, so Tim, you're up. Tell us why axolotls would make the mayor with the mostest?

**BLOOM:**

[CHATTER]

**TIM PLATT:** Power, I'm obsessed with it. Powerful babies, I've been searching for them. The most powerful baby in the world, I've found him. This guy is named after a god. He's cute as a button, and he can regrow his own limbs. Give it up for baby face axolotl.

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

**AXOLOTL:** Thanks, Tim. Yes, I am incredibly strong, but I'm also like super popular. In fact, before beginning this speech, I was already one of the most popular animals on the planet. You play *Minecraft*? I'm in it. You play *Fortnite*? I'm in that, too. You hang out on Instagram and TikTok, I'm dancing on them. You spend money? I'm on the 50 peso bill in Mexico.

You watch movies? I'm in all of them. Well, I'm in the *How to Train Your Dragon* movies. The dragon Toothless is based on me. In the United States, the only part that's more in demand than the axolotl is the dog, whom, though loyal, we can all admit lacks the backbone for a leadership position. You can be a part of my historic success. You already love axolotls. Why not vote for one, too?

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

**MOLLY** All right, Katie, your turn. What does the standing on one leg party have to offer?

**BLOOM:**

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**JESSICA VAN GLITTER FLAMINGO ST. CLAIRE:** Fellow citizens, when you step into the voting booth, vote for me, Jessica van Glitter Flamingo St. Claire. I was born to be the mayor of this South Florida town. I can do this job sleeping on one foot. Let's see the axolotl do that. He can't. He's so slimy. He'll probably trip trying to balance, and he's tiny. You might need glasses to see him.

**ST. CLAIRE:**

With me, honey, you only need shades because I'm bright. I'm flashy. I'm the image-conscious bird this town needs. Plus, me and my feathered friends help make this town a community. We flock together to support the local shrimp shops, but that loner, the axolotl, he stays home alone like the introvert he is. And us, flamingos, are a beacon of bright things.

Ancient Egyptians use the flamingo to represent the sun god Ra, and in the same way, I shall be a light for this town, providing guidance and goodness. I'll burn bright in my efforts to turn this South Florida town into a South Floridian paradise. I'm classy. I'm flashy, and I'll make this town better than Tallahassee. Vote for me, Jessica van Glitter Flamingo St. Claire.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Two distinct candidates with a lot to offer. All right, Ruby, what stood out to you there about these two mayoral candidates?

**RUBY:** Jessica van Glitter St. Claire, I mean, it's a lot of anti-axolotl and not a lot of pro-flamingo. I'm pro-flamingo, and I'm pro-axolotl.

**KATIE MCVEIGH:** We support--

**RUBY:** She went negative.

**KATIE MCVEIGH:** We support the shrimp shops! We're keeping the shrimp shops open!

**RUBY:** Yeah, shrimp shops are important. Yeah, you know what? Yeah, shrimp shops are really important, and axolotls are--

**KATIE MCVEIGH:** Thank you.

**TIM PLATT:** Yeah, no, I agree. It's important to have one constituency that all of your efforts go towards. Yeah, so we'll speak to the shrimp shops but nobody else. Great, yeah.

**KATIE MCVEIGH:** Oh, OK, OK. Yeah, the axolotls get such a good base of constituents being a total loner who eats the arms of his friends.

**TIM PLATT:** I would love to be eaten by my friends.

[LAUGHTER]

I would love it. I would love it.

**KATIE MCVEIGH:** If you had any friends.

**TIM PLATT:** What?

**KATIE MCVEIGH:** They're loners. They're loners, man.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** OK, so Ruby, we need you to award a point. Again, the criteria is up to you. Who had more facts in their Micro Round? Who convinced you to vote for them? Who made you laugh? Have you made your decision, Ruby?

**RUBY:** Yes, yes, I have.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Fantastic. Then it's time for our third round, the Super Stealthy--

**PEOPLE:** Ha ha hu ha.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** --Sneak Attack. Your sneak attack is called Sentence by Sentence. This challenge requires a little teamwork. Tim and Katie, we want you to put aside your differences to build a story together that involves both flamingos and axolotls. You'll each get three sentences to build this story from the ground up, and you'll go back and forth, taking turns sentence by sentence until the story is done. And Ruby, it's going to be your job to decide which side contributed more intriguing sentences to the story. Does that make sense?

**TIM PLATT:** Yes.

**KATIE MCVEIGH:** Yes!

**MOLLY BLOOM:** All right, Tim went first last time. So Katie, you're going to start our story with the first sentence. Take it away.

**KATIE MCVEIGH:** The night was hot, but the waters were cold in the most toxic swamp in all of South Florida. Jessica van Glitter Flamingo St. Claire stood on one leg as she had done a thousand times before. She took a shrimp between her lips, and she chewed on it like it was a toothpick, and then she spit into the swamp, and she turned to her side. And what did she see? The smallest axolotl to ever wander in to the saltiest, briniest, most toxic cold swamped Florida.

**TIM PLATT:** The crescent moon shown upon the flamingo, and the axolotl was slurping down his own tail like it was a piece of spaghetti. He looks up. Hey, I've been lonely. Seems like you're all having fun over there.

[CHUCKLES]

**KATIE MCVEIGH:** How'd a kid like you get in a swamp like this, asked Jessica van Glitter St. Claire, spitting another shrimp into the swamp beneath her, a swamp that no human could step in because it was too gosh, darn toxic. She looked at the axolotl, and she said, what's your name? Question mark, closed quotation.

**TIM PLATT:** The axolotl--

[SLURPS]

--me? I'm Axolotl, sort of a loner by trade, but open to getting to know you a little bit better?

[CHUCKLES]

**KATIE MCVEIGH:** Jessica van Glitter Flamingo St. Claire shook out her wings, nodded her head, and pointed out a group of the seediest gosh darn flamingos you'd ever seen. Want to come to a party, Axolotl? She asked, making sure she clipped every ax in axolotl.

**TIM PLATT:** No.

[LAUGHTER]

**MOLLY** The end.

**BLOOM:**

[LAUGHS]

All right, Ruby, you heard this story of a friendship or maybe not friendship in a swamp in South Florida. It's time to award a point. Again, the criteria is up to you. Have you made your decision?

**RUBY:** Yes. Yes, Molly, I have.

[BELL RINGS]

**MOLLY** Excellent, Ruby. Then it is time for our final round--

**BLOOM:**

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**ANNOUNCER:**--The Final Six. Tan tara ran.

**MOLLY** All right, Tim, you've got just six words to tell us why we should go full throttle for axolotls?

**BLOOM:**

**TIM PLATT:** Regrown limbs, baby god, I'm sold.

[LAUGHTER]

**MOLLY** Nicely done. All right, Katie, you've got just six words to show us why we want to flammable with flamingos.

**BLOOM:**

**KATIE** Fabulous flamboyance from coast to coast.

**MCVEIGH:**

**MOLLY** Mm, very good.

**BLOOM:**

**KATIE** All right--

**MCVEIGH:**

**SPEAKER:** Hey, Ruby.

**MOLLY** Time to award a point for this final round, Have you made your decision?

**BLOOM:**

**RUBY:** I have, but it was tight. I'll be honest.

[BELL RINGS]

**MOLLY** Are you ready to crown one team the Smash Boom Best?

**BLOOM:**

**RUBY:** Yes.



**MOLLY** Drum roll please.

**BLOOM:**

[DRUM ROLL]

And the winner is?

**RUBY:** Flamingos.

**TIM PLATT:** No!

**KATIE** Whoa!

**MCVEIGH:**

**TIM PLATT:** No!

**KATIE** [LAUGHS]

**MCVEIGH:**

**TIM PLATT:** [SPEAKING GIBBERISH]

**KATIE** Yeah, the axolotl is alone again.

**MCVEIGH:**

[LAUGHS]

**MOLLY** Ruby, was there a moment that decided things for you? Like what put it over the edge for flamingos?

**BLOOM:**

**RUBY:** I think what put it over the edge for flamingos was-- and this is highly specific. I'm sorry, Tim.

**TIM PLATT:** OK.

**RUBY:** It's, they also have a god. You're going to bring in something the other team also has in your final six. Are you kidding me? The final six is something for its exclusivity. It's not diversity or inclusion. It's exclusion. And--

**MOLLY** So it was the final six you found very persuasive?

**BLOOM:**

**RUBY:** I mean, honestly, it was two points on both sides. The final six was truly a deciding factor.

**KATIE** Shout out to the Egyptians.

**MCVEIGH:**

**RUBY:** Shout out to the Egyptians really.

**TIM PLATT:** I got to be honest. I cannot quibble with that metric.

**KATIE** Usually, you're such a metric quibbler, but not today.

**MCVEIGH:**

[LAUGHTER]

**TIM PLATT:** I know. Usually, I'm like knocking down metrics with my quibbles.

[LAUGHS]

**KATIE** Quibbling about metrics, this man. Tim, I loved everything that you were bringing to this game. I was not pro-axolotl  
**MCVEIGH:** before I entered this room today. But I love these vicious forever babies. Do I fear them? Yes. Do I respect them? Yes. Do I respect you more than I ever have in my whole life? To hear you sing is to hear the song of a thousand gods of Mexican rivers and lakes because today, I learned the power of being very truly alone. I learned that maybe the best way to live is by eating off the limbs of your closest pals. So great job, Tim.

**TIM PLATT:** Thank you, Katie. Katie, what a joy to hear you talk. What a joy to hear you say almost anything.

[LAUGHS]

**KATIE** Oh my god.

**MCVEIGH:**

**TIM PLATT:** What an honor to play against you. And I will say--

**KATIE** What an honor.

**MCVEIGH:**

**TIM PLATT:** I was joking about it before, but I didn't realize how much flamingos thrived in toxic environments, and the flamingos were so lucky to have you as their advocate.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**MOLLY** And that's it for today's debate battle. Ruby crowned flamingos the Smash Boom Best. But what about you?  
**BLOOM:**

**RUBY:** Head to [smashboom.org](http://smashboom.org) and vote to tell us who you think won.

**MOLLY** *Smash Boom Best* is brought to you by *Brains On* and APM Studios.

**BLOOM:**

**TIM PLATT:** It's produced by Molly Bloom, Rosie DuPont, Ruby Guthrie, and Aron Woldeslassie.

**MOLLY** We had engineering help from Alexander Simpson and Gary O'Keefe.

**BLOOM:**

**KATIE** Our editors are Shahla Farzan and Sanden Totten.

**MCVEIGH:**

**TIM PLATT:** And we had production help from Anna Goldfield, Marc Sanchez, Anna Weigel, and Nico Gonzalez Wisler.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Our executive producer is Beth Pearlman, and the APM Studios executives in charge are Chandra Kavati, Alex Schaffert, and Joanne Griffith. Our announcer is Marley Feuerwerker Otto, and we want to give a special thanks to Austin Kross, Taylor Kaufman, Brant Miller, Andy Doucette, and Rachel Breeze for the flamingo sitcom song. Katie, is there anyone you'd like to give a shout out to today?

**KATIE MCVEIGH:** Yeah, absolutely. I'd love to give a shout out to Ruby Guthrie. I'd also love to give a shout out to Pink Floyd, the flamingo that escaped the zoo in Kansas. I mean, that's fascinating. Way to go, Pink.

[LAUGHS]

**MOLLY BLOOM:** And Tim, how about you? Any special shout outs?

**TIM PLATT:** This flamingo that's escaped the zoo, I'm sorry. I'm transfixed by this tale. Still abroad, still making it happen, named after a band I cared about at some point in my life, though not currently.

[LAUGHTER]

**MOLLY BLOOM:** And how about you, Ruby? You want to give any special thanks?

**RUBY:** I'm going to give a shout out to Ruby Guthrie for being the other Ruby. I couldn't do it without her. Being Ruby is hard. And I think that we both do it beautifully. But that's where my shout out goes. Yeah. Thank you, Ruby Guthrie.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Nice.

**RUBY:** Yeah, and Rosie.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Awesome. Before we go, let's check in with Hudson and see who he thinks should win his North Pole versus South Pole debate.

**HUDSON:** If I had to choose, I would choose North Pole. The North Pole is warmer, and some people think Santa is at the North Pole.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Do you have an idea for a knock down drag out debate? Head to [smashboom.org](http://smashboom.org) and tell us about it. We'll be back with a new debate battle next week.

**TIM PLATT:** Goodbye.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** See you later.

**KATIE MCVEIGH:**

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**THEME SONG:** Ooh, you're the smash boom best. Ooh, put you through the test. Ooh, you're the smash boom best. Ooh, better than the rest. It's a smash boom best. It's a smash boom best.

**TIM PLATT:** I am so happy and pleased to be the representative of someone losing with grace, Katie.

**KATIE** I'm not going to win with grace because here's what I'll tell you, forever babies can't drive. Meh meh. Try getting a  
**MCVEIGH:** license, axolotl.

**TIM PLATT:** Mm.

[CHUCKLES]