

- SUBJECT 1:** You're listening to *Brains On*, where we're serious about being curious.
- SUBJECT 2:** *Brains On* is supported in part by a grant from the National Science Foundation.
- MOLLY:** After the people go home.
- CORALIE:** After the gates are closed and the lights are off.
- MOLLY:** After the person selling those big pretzels has stopped selling those big pretzels. It's the zoo after dark. But what's really happening after the gates close?
- ALISON:** Ah, I think they probably, like, sleep or maybe just moving around a little bit.
- ASHTON:** They probably are running around.
- CALEB:** They probably, like, fool around while no one's watching them.
- LIAM:** They're actually, like, having a party.
- JULIAN:** Then when the zookeeper comes back, they'll go back into their cages. Then after the zookeeper leaves, they all go back and start partying.
- SUBJECT 3:** No. They get midnight snack banana, and then they go to sleep.
- MOLLY:** Could Alison, Ashton, Caleb, Liam, Julian, and Monair be right?
- CORALIE:** Find out right now.
- [MUSIC PLAYING]
- MOLLY:** You're listening to *Brains On* from APM Studios. I'm Molly Bloom, and my co-host today is Coralie from Port Saint Lucie, Florida. Hi, Coralie.
- CORALIE:** Hi, Molly.
- MOLLY:** Today, we're staying up late and going behind the scenes at the zoo to find out what happens at the park after dark. As always, this episode was inspired by a curious listener.
- AMARA:** My name is Amara, and I'm from San Francisco. My question is, do zookeepers work at night?
- MOLLY:** Coralie, so I'm wondering, do you have a zoo near your house?
- CORALIE:** Not really close. But a little while up, we have a zoo called the Brevard Zoo.
- MOLLY:** Do you have any favorite animals there?
- CORALIE:** Not really. I think they're all, kind of, cool. But I think the bird section there is actually really cool. I kind of want to be an ornithologist and study birds. It's just my interest.
- MOLLY:** Do you have a favorite kind of bird?

CORALIE: I really like owls. Those are one of my favorites.

MOLLY: Owls are really cool. I agree.

CORALIE: What's your favorite animal to see at the zoo, Molly?

MOLLY: I love sloths. So if I can see a sloth, that's my favorite. I also really enjoy the big turtles. They just move so cool. I like to watch them.

CORALIE: Oh.

MOLLY: So what do you imagine happens after the zoo closes up?

CORALIE: I'm imagining the animals mostly act the same, but maybe there's some unique different activities that happen.

MOLLY: Yeah. Sort of the same but still different because, you know, night. we actually answered this question on our *Moment of Um* podcast, which, if you're not subscribed to, you're missing out. Anyway, here's a little of what we learned.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

NANCY HAWKES: So the answer is yes and no. Animal keepers do work at night at all zoos and aquariums sometimes. Hi. I'm Nancy Hawkes, and I am the director of Animal Care at the Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle, Washington. There are some times when we do have staff here at night-- sometimes an animal being born.

We might have the same situation if an animal was sick where they needed medication overnight. Sometimes we have baby birds that are being hand-reared. Their parents either are overwhelmed or their parents aren't around to take care of them, and so we hatch them out in an incubator, and they need to be fed very frequently. And so we have our staff take care of that overnight.

Other times, we're doing things like introductions where we're introducing new animals to each other. Say, a new orangutan has come from another zoo to be paired with an orangutan we have here, and it may be the first night that we're going to leave them together overnight. We would have keepers stay and make sure everything was going smoothly.

MOLLY: Nancy says zoo staff also use cameras to watch the zoo overnight. That way, they can keep an eye on things from home.

CORALIE: But it turns out every zoo is a little bit different.

MOLLY: And there are lots of stories about what happens after guests leave. So to learn more, we're going to swing by three different zoos.

CORALIE: First stop, St. Louis, Missouri.

MOLLY: Fun facts about St. Louis, go.

CORALIE: It sits near the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers.

MOLLY: It's got the largest human made arch in the world.

CORALIE: The arch looks like a silver rainbow, and I want to slide down it.

MOLLY: The first ever Olympic games in the US were held there in 1904.

CORALIE: Famous foods include toasted ravioli and gooey butter cake.

MOLLY: And it's home to our pal, Shahla Farzan.

SHAHLA FARZAN: Hey, Molly. Hey, Coralie.

CORALIE: Shahla, so you live pretty close to the Saint Louis Zoo, right?

SHAHLA FARZAN: Yeah. And I visited a bunch of times, but never after they close. I mean, obviously, I want to know what happens.

CORALIE: Me, too. It's like a big secret.

MOLLY: Yeah. So what does happen?

SHAHLA FARZAN: Well, to find out, I headed over there just before things shut down. And by the time I got there, families were just starting to leave-- maybe ducking into the gift shop to pick out a stuffed animal or baseball cap.

So I showed up right before closing, and one of the zoo security guards was just getting ready to close the gates at the entrance to the zoo. They kind of look like those metal gates that you'd see over a storefront when it's closed, and they're really squeaky.

[GATES SQUEAKING]

SUBJECT 4: Little lubrication would help.

SHAHLA FARZAN: Then the zoo was closed, but I had special permission to stay late. And it was 97 degrees when I got there. St. Louis gets really hot in the summer. So, of course, my first stop was the penguin and puffin house, which happens to be my favorite place at the zoo. It's also literally the coolest. They keep it 45 degrees in there all year round.

So you've got four different penguin species in there-- Rockhoppers, Gentoos, Humboldts, and, of course, the big guys, King Penguins. And they're waddling all over the rocks, jumping in and out of the water, calling to each other. There's just a lot going on. But there's also a lot happening behind the scenes at the end of the day.

And one thing I learned is that before the keepers can close up for the night, every animal needs their dinner. And at the penguin and puffin house, that means the keepers are prepping a lot of raw fish. I met a keeper there named Kim Washington who was taking big plastic buckets of fish out of the fridge.

KIM WASHINGTON: So I am pulling a bucket of capelin and a bucket of smelt. So the smelt is like this little, tiny fish. It almost kind of have a gold-ish, silverish coloring to them, and they're about a size as maybe an adult index finger. Almost kind of like a little dessert snack. And then the capelin, it's a slightly bigger fish. Maybe, I would say, as long as a hot dog.

SHAHLA As she was explaining this, Kim was scooping buckets of ice onto plastic trays, like what you'd have your school
FARZAN: lunch on.

KIM I'm just going to pour the ice in, spread it out a little even.
WASHINGTON:

SHAHLA And then she'd take these big handfuls of raw fish and kind of slap it on top of the ice so it would stay cold.
FARZAN:

CORALIE: That sounds like a lot of fish. How much are they eating?

SHAHLA Yeah. The penguins and puffins are pretty big eaters. So they eat about 80 pounds of fish every day. And if you
FARZAN: do some quick math, that's more than 500 pounds of fish every week, which is about the same weight as an adult grizzly bear. And while I was there, another zookeeper was feeding all the penguins by hand.

And he'd call them each by name and then they'd slowly Waddle over and take a fish. So the whole thing just takes a while.

SUBJECT 5: And as you can probably hear, the fish will hit the water. And then I see Samuel right there indulging.

SHAHLA There's also a lot of other stuff the zookeepers have to do before they can close up. So they clean the animals
FARZAN: habitats, give them vitamins or maybe medicine if they're sick, get them ready for bed, you know, all that good stuff.

MOLLY: Yeah, it sounds kind of like my bedtime routine, honestly. So are the keepers staying overnight at the Saint Louis Zoo?

SHAHLA So, I talked with Anne Tieber about this. She's the curator of birds at the zoo, which means she oversees all of the
FARZAN: birds there.

ANNE TIEBER: As far as a keeper's standpoint, we don't have a lot to do in the evening. So it's pretty quiet. It is kind of fun, actually, to walk through. Usually when the sun's going down, a lot of times the lions will be roaring, or you might hear some sea lions calling, things of that sort. But as a regular rule of thumb in the evening, there just isn't a whole lot to do at night here at the zoo. So.

SHAHLA Anne says there's not really a reason for keepers to stay overnight because most of the animals are asleep.
FARZAN: There are some nocturnal animals, which means they're active at night, like herons, geckos, and your favorite, Coralie, owls. But I also learned that sometimes even the animals that are supposed to be resting will get a little mischievous at night.

CORALIE: Like they're having a slumber party or something?

SHAHLA Yeah, kind of. So the penguins at the Saint Louis Zoo live in this open air habitat. So there's no glass separating
FARZAN: you from the animals. And Anne says when they first built this habitat, the penguins started doing something they didn't expect.

ANNE TIEBER: We found that some of the birds actually did, sort of, porpoise up on the glass and then come out in the middle of the night. They would just hop down on the floor, sort of, have a little party, and then we'd find them sitting by the models the next morning. We have models of penguins on the floor.

SHAHLA So they jump out and wander all around the penguin house, and then they'd get stuck. You know, they can't get
FARZAN: back into their habitat because they can't fly. So the zookeepers put their heads together and came up with a solution. Every night, they roll out this huge metal ramp so the penguins can waddle back up into their habitat. So even now, most nights, the penguins at the Saint Louis Zoo are having parties at night after everybody leaves.

MOLLY: I love the idea of secret penguin parties. Thank you for letting us tag along with you, Shahlah.

SHAHLA My pleasure.

FARZAN:

SUBJECT 6: Ba, brains on.

MOLLY: You know, when I meet new people, I like to talk about penguins.

CORALIE: Oh, yeah? Why is that?

MOLLY: They're good icebreakers. So we learned that in some zoos, keepers feed the animals their dinner, make sure they're safe in a pen, and then leave for the night.

CORALIE: Right. There aren't any keepers working at the Saint Louis Zoo overnight, but that's not true all zoos.

MOLLY: Next stop, Los Angeles, California. Time for more fun facts. LA's famous Hollywood sign originally said Hollywoodland and was used to sell real estate.

CORALIE: There is a tar pit in the middle of the city where scientists found fossils of mammoths and saber-toothed cats. So cool!

MOLLY: The swanky neighborhood of Beverly Hills used to be a lima bean farm.

CORALIE: And the LA Zoo is the kind with the person working the night shift.

KATIE VINCENT:My name is Katie Vincent, and I am a night keeper at the Los Angeles Zoo.

CORALIE: It's Katie's job to check on the animals after dark.

MOLLY: Right. So when visiting hours end, Katie's day is just beginning.

KATIE VINCENT:The guests are pretty much entirely out of the zoo by 5:30 PM. And so at that point, I'm mostly alone at the zoo. I really enjoy how quiet and peaceful it gets. That's something that I really, really appreciate about this position is how still everything feels.

Some of my favorite animals to watch in the evenings are the chimps. Sometimes I watch them make little nests for themselves. They'll take towels, blankets, sometimes paper towels, I've seen, and they'll make themselves a little bed, and that's the coolest thing to watch. And they'll cover their little heads sometimes.

CORALIE: Wait. Is she saying the chimps tuck themselves in at night?

MOLLY: I think she's saying the chimps tuck themselves in at night!

KATIE VINCENT:Yeah. The chimps will tuck themselves in at night.

MOLLY: Cute!

KATIE VINCENT:Currently, my routine at the zoo, which changes a lot, is I'll go check on the koalas. And right now, I'm also locking up some babirusa piglets. And so they get to stay out a little bit later, so that they can have as much time playing out in the daylight as possible.

I go check on these aldabra tortoises, which are really, really, really big tortoises. And if they want to come inside, I bring them inside so I can make sure they're nice and warm for the evening. I go and check on the giant anteater and turn some things on over there. And then I usually head back to the nursery after that.

MOLLY: A big part of Katie's job is to bottle-feed new babies. They usually need bottles every two hours. So she's constantly prepping milk for them and hoping they'll drink it.

KATIE VINCENT:Well, with the babies that need get bottle-fed, I'm usually trying to tell them they really need to go ahead and take this bottle so that they can have a nice full tummies. Because sometimes, they do struggle to get used to that at first. I'm not sure if the babies that I bottle-feed see me as their mother. I know I see them as kids that I'm trying to raise to a certain point. But I feel like once they're off the bottles, it's almost like they turn into wild animals overnight. It's almost like they start to become a lot more wary of me.

As far as the sounds, I mostly hear crickets and owls.

[OWL HOOTING]

The owls are maybe one of my favorite parts of the job. Because I'll be driving around the zoo at night and all of a sudden you just see a flash of feathers flying in front of the truck, and it's really special.

CORALIE: Katie says these owls aren't part of any exhibit, they're just visitors.

MOLLY: Right. The Los Angeles Zoo is next to a big wild area called Griffith Park, and it's full of animals, too-- wild ones. Sometimes they sneak into the zoo.

KATIE VINCENT:Sometimes I see things like skunks and raccoons and opossums. One time I saw a nightjar, which is a really cool nocturnal bird. I see a lot of insects and other crawly critters that I think a lot of the daytime people don't get to see.

MOLLY: These nighttime visitors aren't always there just to look.

CORALIE: A few years ago, a mountain lion was seen on cameras sneaking around the zoo.

MOLLY: That night, a koala went missing. They can't prove it was the mountain lion. But since then, zoo staff have upgraded their night security and even installed a special security system.

KATIE VINCENT:We actually have predator sprinklers that help-- if there's any motion sensed in front of certain areas, it shoots sprinklers. So it's a very harmless deterrent to any predators that might be in the area.

MOLLY: Katie is also responsible for handling the rare zoo emergency like, say, if the power goes out.

CORALIE: Katie checks to make sure all the generators are on.

MOLLY: Or if an animal gets sick or injured.

CORALIE: Katie calls the zoo veterinarian.

KATIE VINCENT: So things get really busy if there are multiple babies that need bottle feedings, multiple animals that need checks. Sometimes I have to go to the airport to pick up animals and drop them off. And that can really take up a lot of time in the evening.

CORALIE: Hold up, rewind. Did she just say pick up animals at the airport?

[RECORD REWINDING]

KATIE VINCENT: Sometimes I have to go to the airport to pick up animals and drop them off.

MOLLY: She totally did.

CORALIE: OK tell me everything.

KATIE VINCENT: So when animals get transferred around between zoos, a lot of times those flights happen in the evening, whether it's animals that are going to other places from the Los Angeles Zoo or animals coming to the Los Angeles Zoo from other places. And so part of my job is going to the airport and picking up or dropping off animals.

MOLLY: Don't worry, you won't see a tiger or gazelle sitting next to you on your next flight. These zoo animals travel in special cargo planes where they stay safe in crates.

KATIE VINCENT: The only animals that I would be picking up are ones that are small enough and safe enough for me to handle their crates on my own. And so one example is we picked up two wallabies. What I do is I drive down to the airport. I go to the cargo section, which is both where the animals would get dropped off and picked up, and I pick up the animals.

I check on them. I make sure they're healthy and everything's OK. And then I take them back to the zoo. And there's a special area in the zoo where you bring new animals, and I'll get them set up there for the evening. I enjoy the absurdity of a lot of the situations I get into as a night keeper. And I enjoy thinking, well, I've got to go pick up some wallabies at LAX now.

MOLLY: As long as there are no emergencies, Katie leaves the zoo just after midnight. After that, the animals are on their own.

CORALIE: She says they pretty much just sleep. Some stay awake and then sleep in during the day. But overall, the zoo is calm and quiet at night.

MOLLY: But when the sun starts rising, the animals get busy, and so do the keepers. We'll find out what it's like in the morning next.

CORALIE: So, keep listening.

MOLLY: We're working on an episode about space. It's vast. It's mysterious. It's awe-inspiring. And we want you to write a space jingle for us.

CORALIE: A jingle is a short, little tune to tell someone how great something is. You might hear them in a commercial.

MOLLY: So, Coralie, I'm just wondering, what would your space jingle be?

CORALIE: It would probably be something like, (SINGING) It's great in space. Buy the new extra large plasma generator.

MOLLY: [LAUGHS] Very good. I like that one a lot. Stuck in my head already. Listeners, record yourself singing your space jingle and send it to us at brainson.org/contact. While you're there, you can send us mystery sounds, drawings, and questions.

CORALIE: Like this one.

RIA: Hi. My name is Ria, and my question is, why are dogs so protective of their owners?

MOLLY: You can find an answer to that on our *Moment of Um* podcast. It's a short, fun dose of science and facts every weekday.

CORALIE: Find it wherever you listen to *Brains On*.

MOLLY: Just search for *Moment of Um*.

CORALIE: You're listening to *Brains On*. I'm Coralie.

MOLLY: And I'm Molly. We've been visiting zoos all over the country today to try to figure out what happens at night after the zoo closes. But before we head to our next stop, it's time for the--

SUBJECT 7: (WHISPERING) Mystery sound.

MOLLY: All right. Are you ready, Coralie, to guess the mystery sound?

CORALIE: Yes.

MOLLY: Here it is.

[CRUNCHING]

[BIRDS SINGING]

I have no idea what this is. What do you think?

CORALIE: So, I kind of heard-- it was sounded like wild birds. It was like something breaking sticks or eating, or something.

MOLLY: Yeah. I heard those birds, too. And I thought crunching as well.

CORALIE: Yeah.

MOLLY: Someone munching on something. All right. Well, we'll hear it again after the credits and give you another chance to guess and hear the answer, OK?

CORALIE: OK.

SUBJECT 8: Brains, brains, brains on.

CORALIE: You know one thing that doesn't happen at night at the zoo? Poker games.

MOLLY: Why is that?

CORALIE: Too many cheetahs!

MOLLY: Oh, yeah.

[LAUGHS]

OK. Time to visit one more zoo. This one is in Philadelphia. Here comes some facts.

CORALIE: It's known as the city of brotherly love but also the Quaker city, the city of neighborhoods, and the place that loves you back.

MOLLY: Philadelphia loves cheesesteaks and once even set a record for making one as long as a football field.

CORALIE: It's a city of firsts. It was home to the first hospital in the US, the first daily newspaper, and the first ever zoo-- the Philadelphia Zoo which opened in 1874.

MOLLY: That's the zoo our friend Nico Gonzalez Wisler visited. Hey, Nico.

NICO WISLER: Hi, Molly. Hi, Coralie.

CORALIE: So, Nico, you visited the Philadelphia Zoo to find out what happens when the night is over. But before things open up, what was it like?

NICO WISLER: Well, the zoo opens its doors at 9:30 AM. But the keepers get here much earlier to start getting things ready. By the time I got there at 7:45, the grounds were already buzzing with activity. I first met up with keeper Rebecca Pilkington as she was starting her day at KidUZoo. It's an exhibit where kids can get up close to animals like goats, sheep and mini horses.

**REBECCA
PILKINGTON:** So the first thing zookeeper does at the beginning of the day is we check on all of our animals. So we get here bright and early, and we specifically come over to the stables and check on all the goats, make sure everyone's good from overnight.

MOLLY: Ooh. I'm imagining all of the goats snuggled up, watching early morning cartoons.

NICO WISLER: Well.

CORALIE: Or eating breakfast in bed!

NICO WISLER: That's more like it. Once Rebecca checks on all the goats, she moves them inside and gives them big buckets of grain to eat in their stalls. The goats eat. And then in order to digest, they immediately lie down to chew what's called cud.

[GOATS CHEWING]

Goats digest in four rounds. After they eat and swallow, they bring the food back up and chew it all over again so they can fully digest it.

**REBECCA
PILKINGTON:** They do have to be at rest when they are chewing their cuds. That's why they'll go down and rest, and then you'll see all of this chewing happening.

NICO WISLER: While the goats finish their breakfast, the keepers work on raking the yard. The goats were in there all night, and it was pretty messy. Gives a whole new meaning to the expression party-poopers.

REBECCA And we'll get the yard nice and cleaned. We like to make sure it's nice and clean for our guests, as well, because
PILKINGTON: goats, they do poop all day long. So we like to make sure that it's all cleaned up and fresh for them. And then we'll put hay out for everybody, and then we shift everybody out. And then we'll open the yard up for the day.

NICO WISLER: Next, I ran into Samantha Nestor. She's one of the primate keepers at the zoo. And she had just finished getting the gorillas ready for their day.

SAMANTHA So the gorillas sleep downstairs in an off exhibit area we call holding. So first thing in the morning, I unlock
NESTOR: holding. I turn on the lights. And I go back and I say, good morning guys. And the first thing they do is give me this amazing grumble.

[GORILLA GRUMBLING]

The gorilla grumble is a happy sound that they make when they're happy to see someone or they're happy to be eating something. So in this case, it's just the way that they say good morning to me.

MOLLY: Aw. That's so sweet! The gorillas are up and at them and ready to say hello.

NICO WISLER: Well, not all of them.

SAMANTHA Motuba, our silverback, is probably the last one out of bed. He's 37. He's a little bit arthritic, so he behaves kind
NESTOR: of like-- 37 is a little bit older for a gorilla. So he's a little slow to get out of bed. Whereas, the five-year-olds are right at the front of the mesh saying good morning to me and ready for their biscuits.

[CRUNCHING]

MOLLY: I really identify with Motuba. I am not a morning person. I am also in my late 30s. I am also, you know, sore and stiff in all of the parts of my body. But, Coralie, are you a morning person?

CORALIE: Um, to be honest, I pretty much am. I wake up pretty darn early to play video games before school.

MOLLY: Aw, nice. I wish I had your energy. Motuba does too.

NICO WISLER: That's awesome, Coralie. I'm trying to become a morning person, but I have not yet.

CORALIE: It's a kid trait.

MOLLY: [LAUGHS]

NICO WISLER: It's a kid trait. Maybe that's true. Samantha told me that the morning is really her only quiet time with the gorillas during the day. So it's a good chance for her to make sure everything seems OK. One way she does that is by taking a big whiff.

SAMANTHA Gorillas are very fragrant. They smell kind of like a mix between a wet dog and onions. They're very smelly. They
NESTOR: also have a lot of flatulence.

[FLATULENCE]

So it's just-- it's a smelly place to be. But when you've been their keeper long enough, you know something's going on when it smells different when you go back there.

MOLLY: Farting gorillas!

NICO WISLER: Yeah, farting gorillas, smelly gorillas. What she told me, Coralie, was that if the gorillas get into a fight, she can smell it in the morning. If they're stressed, they smell extra bad.

SAMANTHA
NESTOR: Gorillas are just like humans, they get into disagreements with each other. So sometimes these things happen overnight. We have siblings right now, two little five-year-olds. So they get into some arguments. And the mom and dad have to, kind of, get in and break it up. And you can actually smell that when you walk in the morning. If they've had an argument overnight, you can smell that something's up.

So you, as a zookeeper, you're a detective. And you use these different clues to figure out what happened and why. Your nose is really important, almost as important as your eyes in your ears as a zookeeper.

NICO WISLER: By the time we left Samantha, the zoo was officially open for visitors-- the humankind. The animals were all in their exhibits, some of the keepers were already giving presentations to guests, and kids and families were pouring in.

CORALIE: Thanks for sharing all this, Nico.

MOLLY: Yeah, sounds like the Philadelphia Zoo is a very busy place in the morning.

NICO WISLER: It is. So next time you visit a zoo, remember, it takes a lot of people to keep all the animals safe and healthy. See you two later.

CORALIE: Bye.

MOLLY: By the way, Coralie, did you hear about the gorilla that took over his father's job?

CORALIE: Yeah. He went into the monkey business.

MOLLY: Yeah. After the zoo closes, keepers feed the animals and help them get ready for the night.

CORALIE: Some zoos had people work the night shift. It's their job to feed the baby animals and check on the adults.

MOLLY: Some keepers even have to pick up animals at the airport.

CORALIE: Zoos are quiet most of the night, but in the morning, things get busy.

MOLLY: Animals get their breakfasts and pens get cleaned.

CORALIE: Some keepers can tell how an animal's doing just by smelling them, especially gorillas who have very strong odors.

MOLLY: That's it for this episode of *Brains On*.

CORALIE: This episode was produced by Shahla Farzan, Sanden Totten, Nico Gonzalez Wisler, Molly Bloom, Rose Dupont, Anna Goldfield, Ruby Guthrie, Marc Sanchez, and Anna Weggel.

MOLLY: This episode was sound design by Rachel Breeze and mixed by Anna Haberman. We had engineering help from Frank Favetta. Special thanks to Danielle Reich, Maria Bryant, and Michael Stern. Thanks also to Monair, Alison, Julian, and Rebecca Wilson for telling us what they thought happened at the zoo overnight.

Our executive producer is Beth Perlman. And the executives in charge of APM Studios are Chandra Kavati, Joanne Griffith, and Alex Shaffer.

CORALIE: *Brains On* is a nonprofit public radio program.

MOLLY: If you're interested in supporting the show, head to brainson.org.

CORALIE: While you're there, you can submit ideas for future episodes. Send us your fan art and get your very own *Brains On* hoodie.

MOLLY: That's brainson.org/contact. Coralie, are you ready to go back to that mystery sound again?

CORALIE: Yes.

MOLLY: Let's hear it one more time.

[CRUNCHING]

[BIRDS SINGING]

That one's pretty short. So let's hear it again.

[CRUNCHING]

[BIRDS SINGING]

OK. Any new thoughts?

CORALIE: OK. So I think the birds in the background are, kind of, background noise, like they're wild birds. So it's-- I hear human chatter in the background as well. So there's this also noise that weirdly sounds like a dog panting for some random reason to me. So I'm going to guess it's, like, people walking and, like, stepping on sticks, and there's animals around them, and birds are chirping, probably early in the morning.

MOLLY: I like it. You're like an ear detective. Some really good listening there. I'm ready to hear the answer. Are you ready to hear the answer?

CORALIE: Yes.

MOLLY: All right. Here it is.

AMELIE: Hi. I'm Amelie.

CHARLES: I'm Charles.

CORA: I'm Cora.

CHARLES: We're from Simi Valley, California. That was the sound of a horse eating grass. The horse's name was Adonis. The sound reminds us of eating apples or carrots or something crunchy.

MOLLY: Oh. OK. So there were definitely birds there, yes. There was definitely munching, which we thought the first time around.

CORALIE: I did not expect a herbivore, honestly. It sounded more like a carnivore eating something. But, yeah--

MOLLY: Interesting.

CORALIE: --it sounded like hay.

MOLLY: Who knew grass could be so crunchy?

[CRUNCHING]

Now it's time for the brain's honor roll. These are the incredible kids who keep this show going with their mystery sounds, drawings, questions, and high fives.

[LISTING HONOR ROLL]

We'll be back next week with more answers to your questions.

CORALIE: Thanks for listening!