

## Brains On (APM) | Smash Boom Best Ghosts vs. Zombies 01FTC8B8R9PX6YEAY2X1KJN6DQ

NARRATOR: From the brains behind *BrainsOn*, it's *SmashBoomBest*.

**AVA:** 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 Frightful Free-For-All is sure to scare your pants off.

It's a duel between phantoms and the living dead. It's ghosts versus zombies. Who will win, ghoulish ghosts or zealous zombies? There's no telling in this unbelievable battle. But we've got Ava from Chicago, Illinois here to help us decide. Hi, Ava.

**AVA:** Hi.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** So Ava, do you like scary things like ghosts and zombies?

**AVA:** Yes, I love scary things like ghosts and zombies. I like reading books, and movies, and hearing stories about it. I love everything about it.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** And Ava, you do debate. So I'd like to know what you look for in an argument.

**AVA:** I'm a huge fan of statistics. And I really like to be told a story. So if you can tell me a story, then I will be able to put my judgment in and maybe vote for you.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** I'm guessing ghosts and zombies will be heavier on the story side than the statistics side. But we know, you never know. Well, let's meet our debaters. Here to defend those supernatural spirits we call ghosts, it's comedian and host of *Forever Ago*, Joy Dolo. Hi, Joy.

**JOY DOLO:** Hi, Molly. I hurt my finger. Now, I have a boo-boo.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** [LAUGHS] So Joy, in a single sentence, why are ghosts the *Smash Boom Best*?

**JOY DOLO:** Oh, you took my joke, Molly. [LAUGHS] Ghosts are way better than zombies because there's three reasons. A, they are transparent, a.k.a. trustworthy. They are friendly, a.k.a. trustworthy. And they are our past ancestors, here protecting us from zombies who only have a thirst for human flesh, a.k.a. trustworthy.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** And here cheering on the undead, a.k.a. zombies, it's co-host of the *Story Pirates Podcast*, Peter McNerney. Hi, Peter.

**PETER** Oh, hi, Molly Bloom!

**MCNERNEY:**

**MOLLY BLOOM:** I'm so happy you're here.

**PETER** I'm so excited to be here. I don't know if you can tell, but I'm very excited!

**MCNERNEY:**

**MOLLY BLOOM:** So Peter, in one sentence, why are zombies the coolest?

**PETER** All right. Ready for this?

**MCNERNEY:**

**JOY DOLO:** Ready.

**PETER MCNERNEY:** Zombies, if you don't find them scary, you should check your pulse because it may be they've already got you.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** [GASPS]

**JOY DOLO:** Wow, that doesn't sound like anything I want to be a part of.  
[LAUGHTER]

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Chilling start. All right. Let's review our game show format.

[UPBEAT MUSIC]

We've got four rounds of debate. Round 1 is the Declaration of Greatness, where our debaters each present a fact-filled argument in favor of their side, followed by a 30-second rebuttal from their opponent. Then we've got the Micro Round, where each team delivers a creative response to an assignment they received in advance.

Round 3 is the Sneak Attack, where we'll surprise debaters with a challenge they need to respond to on the spot. And to wrap it all up, we've got the Final Six, where each team will have just six words to drive home the awesomeness of their side.

Our judge, Ava, will award two points in the first round-- one for her favorite rebuttal and one for the declaration she likes best. Then she'll award one point in each round after that. But she'll keep her decision secret until the end of the debate.

Listeners, we want you to judge, too. Grab a pen and paper and tally those points as you listen. At the end of the show, head to our website, SmashBoom.org, and vote for whichever team you think won. OK, everybody, are you ready?

**PETER MCNERNEY:** Born ready.

**AVA:** Definitely.

**JOY DOLO:** Oh, yeah. This is going to be grave-y.  
[LAUGHTER]

**PETER MCNERNEY:** Oh.

**JOY DOLO:** Did you get it?

**PETER MCNERNEY:** That joke was rotten--

**MOLLY BLOOM:** [LAUGHS]

**PETER** --like zombies. Then it's time for the--

**MCNERNEY:**

**NARRATOR:** Declaration of Greatness.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Our debaters are going to present awe-inspiring arguments in favor of their side. We flipped a coin. And Joy, you're up first.

**JOY DOLO:** Woo-woo!

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Tell us why ghosts are the ghouls with the most.

[OMINOUS MUSIC]

**JOY DOLO:** I'm going to tell you a story, a ghost story. Meet my friend Sarah Palm.

**SARAH PALM:** The first time I ever encountered a ghost, I was probably seven or eight years old.

**JOY DOLO:** She'd been sick and woke up in the middle of the night, only to realize she couldn't move her legs. It felt like they were pinned to the bed.

**SARAH PALM:** And at the time, I had a nightlight.

**JOY DOLO:** So she could see everything clearly. And when she looked down at her feet--

**SARAH PALM:** There was an indent next to my legs, as if someone were sitting on the end of my bed. My heart was fluttering crazily. I was very afraid but too scared to call out for my parents.

**JOY DOLO:** There was only one thing she could think to do. She kicked with all her strength.

**SARAH PALM:** And then the blanket freed.

**JOY DOLO:** And the ghost was gone. But she was left with an amazing feeling.

**SARAH PALM:** And that whatever it was, it didn't want to hurt me. It was like there was someone there just watching over me while I slept, while I got better.

**JOY DOLO:** Woo, woo, woo, wow. I've got chills. Eeh, Sarah. Now, imagine if that had been a zombie.

[GRUNTS]

I've seen *The Walking Dead*. There would be nothing left of Sarah. Thank goodness it was a ghost because ghosts aren't just scary. That's an unfair stereotype, you guys. They can be our friends, our protectors. You just got to give them a chance to-- jump out! Did I scare you? Was that scary? Good. OK, no.

When I say ghosts, I mean the soul or spirit of a dead person.

[OMINOUS MUSIC]

Some people see them, but you can also just feel them. They're that unknown presence that makes the hairs on the back of your neck stand up. And even though there's no scientific proof of their existence, around 50% of Americans believe in them, in goo-goo-goo-ghost!

Believing in ghosts isn't a new trend like Myspace or Napster. That's for you, parents. It's been going on since the beginning of human civilization.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

In ancient Egypt, spirits of the deceased were called akh. It was believed that if you did all the right things while you were alive, your akh would chill in a beautiful place called the Field of Reeds for eternity. You'd get a house, just like the one you had in life, with a peaceful stream and your favorite tree and a dog.

[BARKS]

Yeah, you guys. You get a ghost dog. The Field of Reeds was lit, no cap. I'm hip, right? [CHUCKLES] Thank you very much. But if your akh had some unfinished business or some wrongs that needed to be righted, you'd hop on the bus back to Earth and handle your business, ghost style. Boo! Ahh!

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Some of the time, these ancient Egyptian ghosts were out for revenge. And that's a common thing in ghost stories. But ghosts aren't just about revenge. They're not one dimensional like zombies. They can also be charming and sweet.

In Nashville, Tennessee, there's a ghost dog, Preston, that watches over children as they trick or treat.

[DOOR CLICKING]

**CHILD:** Trick or treat.

**JOY DOLO:** And there's a ghost in Tao Dan Park in Vietnam that wanders the park at night looking for his lost love. How romantic! In Japan, Hanako-san haunts toilets.

[FLUSHING]

Yeah, poops and pees, you guys, poo poo and pee pee. And in pop culture, we have the movie *Casper the Friendly Ghost*, who didn't want to haunt anyone.

**BAND:** (SINGING) Casper the friendly ghost, the friendliest ghost you know. Though grown-ups might look at him with fright, but children all love him so.

**JOY DOLO:** He starred in countless cartoons, comic books, and feature films, including the 1995 film *Casper*, which tells the story of a teenage ghost whose whole ghostly purpose is to experience everything he missed before he passed on.

And at the end of the movie, he transforms into teen heartthrob Devon Sawa and gives Christina Ricci a big dreamy kiss, right on her mouth.

[SMOOCHING]

Oh! Is that a ghost or do I have goose bumps? Call me, Devon. (SINGING) It's never too late to fall in love.

Finally, ghosts can be our protectors. They keep us company and warm our souls. In most religions, there is a belief in life after death, which is why a lot of people feel that our family, friends, and even our pets are watching over us in the great beyond.

Whether we feel the presence of a departed loved one or hear the scrabble of our late dogs feet on the floor, ghosts are a bittersweet beautiful reminder of our love for people and creatures passed. And just think about it. Wouldn't it be awful if your husband came back as a zombie?

Oh, hey, Graham. I thought you were dead.

[GROWLS]

Oh, no! Don't eat me! Oh, you're so rude! Who's going to drive me to the store later? I'd take a visit from a ghost over a zombie any day. Boo! [SCREAMS] I'm OK. I'm OK.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Wow, a surprisingly heartwarming declaration of greatness for ghosts. Ava, what did you think about Joy's declaration of greatness?

**AVA:** I thought it was really interesting. I like how you incorporated things from not only history but in people's beliefs, but also pop culture. So it made sense for them now. And it made sense for the past. I really liked the score, of course. Score makes everything better.

**JOY DOLO:** I agree.

**AVA:** Music makes everything better.

**JOY DOLO:** Did you notice how I started with a story, Ava?

**MOLLY BLOOM:** [LAUGHS]

**AVA:** Yes, yes, I did.

**JOY DOLO:** I just wanted to throw that out there.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** All right. Well, it's time for Peter's rebuttal. You've got 30 seconds to rot Joy's argument. And your time starts now.

[TICKING]

**PETER MCNERNEY:** Joy, while I have great respect for you, I must say that your argument, just like ghosts, I find to be immaterial, wishy-washy, and vague, OK? I'm supposed to trust the groggy and untrustworthy recollections-- lack of recollections of a person confused and half asleep? I think not!

**JOY DOLO:** Isn't that a zombie?

**PETER MCNERNEY:** Yes. In this argument, the best argument that you have is that ghosts are not scary. What is the point of a monster if not to be scary?

**MOLLY BLOOM:** And time.

**PETER** *Casper the Friendly Ghost.*

**MCNERNEY:**

**JOY DOLO:** You know you saw the movie.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** [LAUGHS]

**JOY DOLO:** Don't pretend.

**PETER** Of course! Of course, I saw that movie.

**MCNERNEY:**

**JOY DOLO:** Of course. He was dreamy! [LAUGHS]

**PETER** I won't deny the heartthrobbiness of Devon Sawa.

**MCNERNEY:**

**JOY DOLO:** Thank you. That's all I ask. That's really all ask of you.

**PETER** I'll give you that point.

**MCNERNEY:**

**JOY DOLO:** Thank you.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** All right. Peter, it's time for your declaration. Tell us why zombies are the smash boom brains.

**PETER** Zombies are the greatest monsters of all time.

**MCNERNEY:**

Whoa! Peter, wait. The greatest?

Yes, and I'll tell you why. Because they are (SHOUTING) scary, but in a fun way.

[MISCHIEVOUS MUSIC]

The whole point of a scary story is to experience the excitement of being terrified while still knowing deep down that you'll be OK in the end. It's a cleansing roller coaster of emotions. So tell me, what is scarier than a disgusting rotting dead body walking towards you with the sole intention of eating you?

[GROWLS]

And oh, yeah, did I mention that you can't hurt them? They never sleep. They never stop their pursuit. And everyone they bite turns into a zombie that wants to eat you, too.

[GROWLS]

Capital S, scary! Am I right? Yes, I am. Now, can anyone honestly argue that ghosts are scarier than zombies? Please!

Ruu-- you asked for it. Look at me. I'm a ghost. I have unfinished business. I'm going to scare you by rattling a windowpane and then keep you from getting a good night's sleep by crying about my life choices. Woo-- whoa!

[THUDS]

Whoops, I fell through the floor again. [LAUGHS] Embarrassing. Go on without me!

The only thing scary about a ghost is how vague a threat they are.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

The first true zombie stories came from Afro-Caribbean voodoo folk tales, particularly those from Haiti. In those stories, typically an evil sorcerer would bring the dead back to life to do their evil bidding.

[GROWLS]

These stories slowly made their way to America, where they were popularized in the '20s and '30s through books like *The Magic Island* and movies like *White Zombie* with Bela Lugosi. But it wasn't until 1968 that the modern, relentless, flesh-eating zombie was born in George Romero's classic film, *Night of the Living Dead*. [COUGHS] Oh, well, I'm sorry. Excuse me.

From there, the world went crazy for zombies. Just think about all the zombie franchises that are alive-- pun intended-- and well today-- *Plants Versus Zombies*, the *Resident Evil* movies, Minecraft zombies, *The Walking Dead*, *Fear the Walking Dead*, *The Walking Dead World Beyond*, *iZombie*, *Generation Dead*, *Dawn of the Dead*, *Shaun of the Dead*, *Juan of the Dead*.

I could go on a lot longer, but *Smash Boom Best* has given me a word limit. So let's move on.

[MISCHIEVOUS MUSIC]

But why do zombies work so well in so many different kinds of stories? Two words, my friends-- meta, phors. That's actually one word, metaphors, now that I think about it. But zombies are a great way to highlight and heighten an endless number of real life fears and anxieties.

For example, in George Romero's follow-up up zombie movie, 1978's *Dawn of the Dead*, the main characters are trapped in a shopping mall filled with zombies. The whole thing is a big metaphor for mindless consumerism. That is America's seemingly endless appetite for owning stuff.

Did you say you're selling something? Because if you are, I want it.

Oh, no. I was just talking about--

Hey, guys! There's a sale!

**SHOPPER:** (SHOUTING) For what?

**PETER** (SHOUTING) Who cares? Let's all charge into this department store and savagely search for incredible deals on  
**MCNERNEY:** holiday gifts!

**SARAH PALM:** OK!

[ARGUING]

**PETER** Whew! You see what I mean? Now, just substitute incredible deals with brains, and you've set the scene for a terrifying and compelling zombie story. Now, if all these zombie stories weren't scary enough, what about real life zombies? Not in people-- at least not yet-- no, I'm talking about a real life insect pathogenic fungus that zombies ants.

**ANT:** Hey, I don't know what you're talking about, pal. My fellow ants and I ain't never turned into no zombie, although this one time my auntie did breathe in some weird fungus spores then started acting really weird, turned away from the colony, found the low-hanging leaf, clamped her jaws into it, died.

And then, get this, the fungus started growing straight out of the back of her head. And then it started to spread more spores. Oh, boy, that's fun to say-- more spores, more spores, more spore-- [COUGHS] more spores. [COUGHS]

You know what? If you'll excuse me, I suddenly have an urge to go bite a leaf. [GROWLS]

**PETER** See? Zombie ants, that's a real thing unlike ghosts.  
**MCNERNEY:**

Oh, [CHUCKLES] you don't know that. We are real and so scary. See? I'm coming to get you. i-- [SCREAMS]  
[THUDS]

OK, I fell through the floor again. Oh, man. Were you scared? Please say yes.

I rest my case.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Oh, a chilling and thrilling declaration for zombies. Ava, what stood out to you about Peter's argument?

**AVA:** Metaphors. I really like the metaphor part. It makes sense because all we see in society and all we see in these movies and TVs is a lot of metaphors. And it just brings it back to our normal day-to-day lives. And everything else was really good.

I really like the fact that you pounded down on the fact that it was more scary and zombies are more scary compared to ghosts, who were-- who can be a little bit less scary.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Hmm. All right. Joy, it's time for your rebuttal.

**JOY DOLO:** Oh, yeah.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** You've got 30 seconds to spook the competition. Ready?

**JOY DOLO:** Oh, yeah.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** OK. Your time starts now.

[TICKING]

**JOY DOLO:** Our ancestors are believed to be ghosts. And mine say, shame on you!

**MOLLY BLOOM:** [LAUGHS]



**JOY DOLO:** Metaphors. Listen, zombies highlight and heightened story, why do we need to learn through fear? This isn't the 1950s anymore. And you know what? They are great monsters. They are scary. And that's all they are.

Ghosts have many different sides. The greatest monsters of all time are supposed to be scary? You've been brainwashed. Listen, stories don't need to be scary anymore. They can be uplifting. Read Oprah's memoir. Listen, they eat brains. Need I say more?

**MOLLY BLOOM:** And time.

[LAUGHTER]

**JOY DOLO:** For real.

[LAUGHTER]

Fungus-- don't get me started.

[LAUGHTER]

Ridiculous.

**PETER MCNERNEY:** Boy, I've got to say, I'm a-- I'm a little surprised but not surprised that Oprah made her way into this argument.

**JOY DOLO:** What is that supposed to mean, Peter? What do you have against Oprah?

**PETER MCNERNEY:** I'm saying-- I don't. I'm saying she belongs everywhere.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** [LAUGHS]

**JOY DOLO:** That's what I'm saying. I love her.

[LAUGHTER]

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Oh, we can all agree.

**PETER MCNERNEY:** We can agree on that. We can agree on Oprah.

**JOY DOLO:** OK. Shake, shake hands.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** All right. Ava, it's time to award your first two points. Remember, it's up to you to decide the criteria here, whatever makes sense to you. Did one side use more fearsome facts? Did the other side tickle your funny bone?

Award both points and mark them down. But don't tell us who's getting them. Have you made your decisions?

**AVA:** Yes.

[BELL DINGING]

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Peter and Joy, how are you feeling about this spooky scuffle so far?

**JOY DOLO:** My leg fell asleep. I don't know.

**PETER  
MCNERNEY:** Yeah, I got to say, the louder I get, it means-- it's-- it means I'm nervous!

[LAUGHTER]

**MOLLY BLOOM:** All right. Well, it's time for a quick break. Let Peter rest his voice. Time to haunt some houses or enjoy some people snacks.

**AVA:** And we'll be right back with more *Smash Boom Best*.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**NARRATOR:** You're watching State of Debate, home to rage in rhetoric and awe-inspiring argumentation.

**TODD  
DOUGLAS:** Welcome back, debate heads. It's me, Todd Douglass, here with my brilliant bestie, Taylor Lincoln.

**TAYLOR  
LINCOLN:** Todd and I love watching a good debate. But when we spot a logical fallacy, oof!

**TODD  
DOUGLAS:** It really takes the wind out of our sails.

**TAYLOR  
LINCOLN:** And today, we spotted a blabbermouth using the red herring fallacy.

**TODD  
DOUGLAS:** That's when you distract from the debate at hand by bringing up another topic that's easier to attack.

**TAYLOR  
LINCOLN:** I get all huffy when I hear someone using this one. It's misleading, and it makes your argument unawesome.

**TODD  
DOUGLAS:** Let's listen in.

[KNOCKING]

**WOLF:** Little pig, little pig, let me in. I've tried blowing down this brick house. But it didn't work. So I'm thinking you should probably just open the door.

**PIG:** Why would we ever do that? You just want to eat us.

**WOLF:** How can you be so sure? I'm one of the nice wolves. Just open the door.

**PIG SISTER:** I'm pretty sure it's not in our best interest to let you in. Wolves eat pigs. And that's a fact.

**WOLF:** You know who also eats pigs? Humans, plus they wear clothes. You can't trust a creature that wears clothes.

**PIG:** Hmm, fair point.

**PIG SISTER:** Brother, this is totally irrelevant to our situation. He's trying to eat us.

[BUZZER RINGS]

**TODD** Yikes! That pig fell for the red herring fallacy.

**DOUGLAS:**

**TAYLOR** Don't let people-- or wolves, for that matter-- distract you from the argument at hand.

**LINCOLN:**

**TODD** The only thing I ever let distract me is bubbles.

**DOUGLAS:**

**TAYLOR** [LAUGHS] It's true. That's it for today, friends. We'll be back next time for more--

**LINCOLN:**

**BOTH:** State of Debate.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**NARRATOR:** *Smash Boom Best.*

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

**AVA:** And I'm your judge, Ava.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** One of my favorite things about this show is all the amazing debate ideas we get from listeners like you. Check out this awesome debate suggestion from Zara in Sheffield, England.

**ZARA:** Hi. My name is Zara, and I'm 9. And my debate idea is e-books versus books.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** We'll check back with Zara at the end of this episode to see which side she thinks should win.

**AVA:** And now, it's back to our debate of the day, ghost versus zombie.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** That's right. And it's time for round 2, the Micro Round.

[BELL DINGS]

Today's Micro Round is running for mayor. Joy and Peter, we asked you to pose as politicians and deliver a speech about why the public should nominate you as mayor. Joy went first last time. So Peter, you're up. Let's hear your mayoral speech for zombies.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**ZOMBIE JAY** Hello, my fellow brains-- I mean, citizens. [CHUCKLES] It's me, Zombie Jay Dead Guy, the leader of the Zombie  
**DEAD GUY:** Horde Party. And I'm running for mayor, just as you have been running for your lives ever since our arrival.

Now, I know this whole zombie apocalypse thing has been hard on you, the living. And I'm sure our platform may seem strange, particularly the part where we just want to eat your brains.

But hear me out, don't you want a mayor like me who will be relentless in his pursuits, who won't sleep, who will just keep going and going and going, driven by an insatiable hunger for brains? Excuse me-- change. [CHUCKLES]

But yes, also brains. And why not? Who doesn't want a mayor with brains? And let me tell you, I got brains, a stomach full of them. Now, I know what you're probably thinking. [SCREAMS] And that's fair.

But think about this-- while you still can. You Can either vote for that ghost and live in a city full of jump scares, constant cold breezes, and endlessly sleepless nights that slowly drive you mad or you can join us and become a Zombie Party member.

Vote for me, Zombie Jay Dead Guy, and you'll be surprised how delicious brains can be. Thank you-- brains.

[LAUGHTER]

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Zombie Jay Dead Guy asking for your vote.

**PETER** He's trustworthy.

**MCNERNEY:**

**MOLLY BLOOM:** [LAUGHS] Joy, it's your turn. Time for some paranormal policy.

**GRACE GHOST:** Hi, I'm Grace Ghost. And I'm hoping to haunt the position of Mayor. You need someone who you can trust, someone with nothing to hide like me. I'm as transparent as they come. You can literally see right through me.

Are you tired of life with the living dead? Sick of them staggering through the streets at all hours, trying to eat our friends and family and ruining every potluck they attend?

**PARTY GUEST:** What a lovely dinner. I'm tasting a new spice. Is it paprika?

**ZOMBIE:** No.

**PARTY GUEST:** Cilantro perhaps.

**ZOMBIE:** No-- brain!

**PARTY GUEST:** Ah! Why did I invite you?

**GRACE GHOST:** Have no fear, Grace Ghost is here. The only thing I'm hungry for is to help get rid of the zombies and improve our city. My opponent is a brainless, soulless ghoul that can't even make complete sentences. But I have a soul that's as real as my plan for cleaning up our parks and beaches.

Sick of potholes? Well, maybe if zombies weren't tramping through the streets, we could give our construction worker friends a break. Ghosts, on the other hand, leave no footprint, just like my renewable energy plan, which will not leave a carbon footprint for the next generation, #recycle Grace Ghost, the transparent fiscally conservative ghost with a soul.

**JOY DOLO:** This ad was paid for by the G-H-O-S-T-S, ghosts honoring our stories today. Shee!

[LAUGHTER]

That was a real plan in there, you guys.

**PETER** Yeah.

**MCNERNEY:**

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Wow, Grace Ghost with the policy specifics, very wonky.

**PETER** Didn't see that fiscal conservative angle coming.

**MCNERNEY:**

**JOY DOLO:** Well, we got to be wise with our money.

[LAUGHTER]

**MOLLY BLOOM:** So Ava, what stood out to you in our debaters' Micro Rounds there? Anything particularly funny or interesting in there that caught your ear?

**AVA:** For our ghosts, I really like how we use the plan and how we tried to make carbon-- make our carbon footprint 0 for the next generation. That's great. And then for zombies, I really liked the political ideas. I really liked how it sounded and how you can bring everyone into the zombie side.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** All right. Ava, it's time to award a point. Again, the criteria is up to you. Don't tell us who it's going to, though. Have you decided?

**AVA:** Mm-hmm.

[BELL DINGS]

**MOLLY BLOOM:** All right. Then it's time for our third around, the super stealthy--

**GROUP:** Aha! Hooha!

**NARRATOR:** Sneak Attack.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Your Sneak Attack today is boo-sical number. We want you to come up with a song from a Broadway musical starring your side. Tell us a bit about where your song appears in the show. Is it the finale? A ballad? Does it kick off the show? Maybe it ends the first act. Sing us a sample of the music. Does that sound good?

**JOY DOLO:** Oh, yeah.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Peter?

**PETER** Oh, yeah.

**MCNERNEY:**

**MOLLY BLOOM:** OK.

**PETER** Oh, yeah.

**MCNERNEY:**

**JOY DOLO:** Ohh. [CHUCKLES]

**MOLLY BLOOM:** OK. We'll give you a few minutes to brainstorm while you work. Let's listen to some spooky-ooky hold music.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

(SINGING) What goes bump in the night? Spooky spirit, what a fright! Where's the ghost? Ah! What a sight! Undead, a-prowling, chewing, and growling. Is that a smile? No. It's ghouling.

All right. Joy, you are up first this time. Spook us with your song.

**JOY DOLO:** All right. Before I begin my song, I just wanted to let you know that this would come right before intermission because it's just-- like ghosts, they will lead you to come back for more.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** [LAUGHS]

**JOY DOLO:** So as you go to the bathroom and get your popcorn and things, you come back. But really, you'll come back because of this song. [CLEARS THROAT]

(SINGING) I am not going into shock. I am not going into shock. You know, I'm just like my mama, I love ghosts with no drama. I am not throwing away my shock.

Oh my God, you guys.

[LAUGHTER]

So stupid.

[LAUGHTER]

**MOLLY BLOOM:** And which character is singing this?

**JOY DOLO:** Oh, this is definitely the main character right before he becomes a ghost, which is going to be the second half. So he's not going into shock because he's just going to pass away. That's why.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** And what's the name it was called, do you think?

**JOY DOLO:** Oh, it's called Ghost-tilton? [LAUGHS]

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Ghost-tilton?

**JOY DOLO:** The Musical, of course.

[LAUGHTER]

**MOLLY BLOOM:** All right. Peter, your turn. Let's hear it.

**PETER MCNERNEY:** Here we go. This is a big turning point in the show. Our main character realizes, as he sings to the love of his life, that he has decided to join the zombies. And he is now going to be unstoppable. He's just been bitten before he starts singing.

(SINGING) Look at me, I'm a brand new zombie. And I won't be stopped as I eat my way to the top! My Darling, I love your smile, your hair. My Darling, I love your eyes everywhere! But mostly, I love your brains!

[LAUGHTER]

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Delightful.

**JOY DOLO:** That was really good.

**PETER** Thank you. It's a big turning point.

**MCNERNEY:**

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Yeah. And does your musical maybe have a name?

**PETER** It's called Run For Your Life.

**MCNERNEY:**

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Mm. Selling out theaters on Broadway right now. OK, Ava, one of these song's going to have to get a point. Which song wowed you the most? Don't tell us who's getting your point. Again, the criteria is up to you. One of these make you tap your toes? Is one stuck in your head? Did one move the plot along better?

[LAUGHTER]

Whatever it is.

**JOY DOLO:** What are you trying to say, Molly?

[LAUGHTER]

Get out of her brain.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Have you awarded your point, Ava?

**AVA:** Yes, I have.

[BELL DINGS]

**MOLLY BLOOM:** OK. Then it's time for our last around.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**NARRATOR:** The Final Six.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Peter, you are up. You've got just six words to knock us undead.

**PETER** OK. Walking dead scarier than whining dead.

**MCNERNEY:**

[LAUGHTER]

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Excellent work. Joy, your turn, give us six words for these awesome apparitions.

**JOY DOLO:** All right. Protective, transparent ancestors, not for consumption.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Mm.

**JOY DOLO:** Do you see how I tied it all into those six?

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Yeah.

**JOY DOLO:** That was really good.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Tied it all together.

**JOY DOLO:** Did it all together nicely, Peter. Did you see that?

**MOLLY BLOOM:** All right.

**PETER** I'm not not impressed.

**MCNERNEY:**

[LAUGHTER]

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Today's supernatural showdown is coming to an end. We've heard the unexpected from specters. And we've got zombies on the brain. Now, it's Ava's turn to award the final point and crown one of these frights the Smash Boo Best. Ava, have you awarded your final point?

**AVA:** Yes.

[BELL DINGS]

**MOLLY BLOOM:** OK. Drum roll, please. And the winner is--

**AVA:** Zombies!

**PETER** Yeah!

**MCNERNEY:**

**JOY DOLO:** What?

**PETER** Wow! Wow! Joy, I'm just as surprised as you are.

**MCNERNEY:**

**JOY DOLO:** Ava, what would Oprah think?

[LAUGHTER]

**PETER** Oh. I just want to say, this is my second time on the show. And after my humiliating defeat in Jurassic Period  
**MCNERNEY:** versus the Ice Age, I've got to say, I'm feeling redeemed. Thank you, Ava.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** So, Ava, can you walk us through just a little bit of your decision making process? Any key moments that really won it for zombies?



**AVA:** As a debater, you really want to defend your stance. And you want to make sure that your stance is put to the point. And you want to make sure that it's really important and it's really the head part of your argument.

And I felt like through the zombies, through everything that they did, they were able to refute the fact that ghosts are supposed to be-- or monsters are supposed to be scary. And ghosts aren't really scary and that they're OK. But zombies are clearly better.

**JOY DOLO:** No, actually, I really enjoyed the argument. And you're right, absolutely. I thought about that when I was going in about how scary both are.

And I was like, I want to show that they can be two things. So I love that you stuck to your guns about being scary. And also, your song was off the chain. It was totally ready for iTunes, like hello. Here I am--

**PETER** You can download now, actually.

**MCNERNEY:**

[LAUGHTER]

I recorded that. Yes, Joy, I was very impressed with all your arguments. I was shaking in my boots as if there was a ghost around. And I will say, the thing that really scared me is you made a great argument that ghosts can be very scary. But they also could be really helpful.

And I heard that, and I was like, oh, that's-- they're versatile. Maybe more so than zombies, and that's the part that surprised me. And bravo.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Well, that's it for today's scary scrape. Ava crowned zombies the *Smash Boom Best*. But what about you?

**AVA:** Head to [SmashBoom.org](http://SmashBoom.org) and vote to tell us who you think should win.

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

**JOY DOLO:** It's produced by Rosie DuPont, Ruby Guthrie, Sanden Totten, and Molly Bloom.

**PETER** We had engineering help from Eric Ramani and Mark Wilkening.

**MCNERNEY:**

And we had production help from Tricia Bebida, Dan Letu, Marc Sanchez and Menika Wilhelm.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Our executive producer is Beth Perlman. And the APM Studios executives in charge are Lily Kim, Alex Shaffer, and Joanne Griffith. Rosie DuPont is the voice of our whole music. And our announcer is Marley Feuerweker-Otto.

We want to give a special thanks to Austin Cross, Taylor Kaufman, Anna Weggel, Brandt Miller, and Lulu. Peter, is there anyone you want to thank today?

**PETER** I would like to thank you, Molly Bloom, for going to middle school and high school with me and being my friend.

**MCNERNEY:**

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Thanks to you for that, too.

**PETER** I will never stop mentioning it.

**MCNERNEY:**

**MOLLY BLOOM:** [LAUGHS] And how about you, Joy, any special shout-outs?

**JOY DOLO:** Oh, yeah, I'd love to thank Sarah Palm for letting me use her story in today's episode. And also Devon Sawa, it's never (SINGING) too late to call me. I will leave my husband for you.

Is that going to be on air?

[LAUGHTER]

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Ava, do you want to give any special thanks?

**AVA:** Special thanks to, of course, everyone here for allowing me to join. And special thanks to the Chicago Debate League for helping me out.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Awesome. And before we go, let's hear who Zara thinks should win in her books versus e-books debate.

**ZARA:** I think e-books would win because you don't have to turn the page. And you can have different brightness, so it means you can read in the dark.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Do you have an idea for a knockdown drag out debate? Head to SmashBoom.org and tell us about it. We'll be back with a new debate battle next week.

**AVA:** Bye!

**JOY DOLO:** Ta-ta!

**PETER** Bye!

**MCNERNEY:**

**MOLLY BLOOM:** Brains. [LAUGHS]

**BAND:** (SINGING) Oh, put you through the test. Oh, you're the smash, boom, best. Oh, better than the rest. It's a smash, boom, best. It's a smash, boom, best.

**MOLLY BLOOM:** We're going to have legions of eight-year-olds googling Devon Sawa.

[LAUGHTER]

**JOY DOLO:** He's going to go viral. [LAUGHS]