

BRAIN WARS

Five, four, three, two, one— “Live from Rainbow Springs, it’s Brain Wars,” announced the baritone voiced director. The studio audience hit their cue with a thunderous round of applause.

Dashing out on stage, a nattily dressed gentleman raised his arms and the audience once again broke out in applause.

“And your host, Mr. Bob ‘Go for Broke’ Morgan,” continued the director.

“Good evening, ladies and gentlemen,” said the much-admired host. “Welcome to Brain Wars, the quiz show that has many of the finest minds in the world standing on edge. Get those cerebrums warmed up and let’s have a party. I’d like to introduce my lovely assistant, Miss Bambi Bambusa ... Come on now, folks, let’s hear it for Bambi ... What do you say, audience? Are you ready?”

Miss Bambi held up a sign that said, “We’re ready, Bob”, and the audience followed her prompting.

“Okay, then,” said Bob ‘Go for Broke’ Morgan. “Our returning champion is Mr. Morris

Calabash from Hole-in-the-Wall, Texas. Come on everybody, let's welcome the man, Rocky Calabash, recently back from his two-week vacation prize at the luxurious Einstein Theory Resort. Well, Rocky, are you ready to meet your opponent?"

"Yes, Bob. I believe I'm up for the challenge."

As Bambi escorted the new contestant to his podium, Bob said, "Good evening, sir. And your name is?"

"Bob, my name is Dr. Randolph Etherton."

"Alright, Doc. Where are you from?"

"Bob, I'm from Radcliff, Michigan."

"What do you do for a living, Randolph?"

"Bob, I'm the chairman of the horticultural department at Franklin University."

"Well, professor, you've got quite a competitor in Rocky, tonight," said Bob. "Are you ready to test your brain, Doc?"

"I certainly am, Bob."

"Okay, Miss Bambi, may I have the envelope, please?"

As Bob opened the envelope, Bambi wrote the category on the board. “Alright, our category tonight is ‘The Garden’. Well, that’s right up your alley, Professor. Rocky, it could be a tough battle for you tonight. Professor, as the challenger, you have the first question. This plant is in the Zygo-phyllaceae family and goes by the common name of Caltrop. Can you give its binomial scientific name?”

“Yes, Bob. That would be *Kallstroemia maxima*.”

“That is correct, Professor. You have the first point.”

Bambi hung a number 1 on the professor’s podium as Bob turned to Rocky. “Okay, Morris, I mean, Rocky. You are up to bat. Your question is, what rose is named after President Abraham Lincoln?”

“Is this a trick question, Bob?”

“No, Rocky.”

“I know this, Bob. My cousin, Virgil, just paid me back the five bucks he owed me, and it had a picture of Mister Lincoln on it.”

“That’s absolutely correct, Rocky, Mister Lincoln.”

Miss Bambi held up the applause sign and then hung a number 1 on Rocky’s podium.

From out of the back of the audience a woman yelled out, “Yee-haw, Rocky. Atta boy!”

Pointing to the woman, Rocky said proudly, “That there’s my wife, Hannah Mae. Hey Hannah.”

“Okay, we’re all tied up at 1 to 1. Back to you, Professor. Miss Bambi has a chemical formula on the blackboard— $(\text{NH}_4)_2 \text{SO}_4$. Can you tell us what chemical that is and how it is used?”

“Yes, Bob. That would be ammonium sulfate and it is used as a fertilizer.”

“That’s it, Professor.”

As Bambi hung a number 2 on the professor’s podium, Bob turned to Rocky again. “Alr-r-r-right, Rocky. Are you ready for question number 2?”

“Let er rip, Bob.”

“Hank Williams, Jr. is a famous country music star. His father was quoted as saying ‘You got to have smelt a lot of mule manure before you can sing like a hillbilly’. Well, Rocky, it looks like

you've got a fertilizer question, too. Okay, Rocky, can you tell us Hank Williams, Jr's father's name?"

Rocky folded his arms and then put one hand up to his chin, as if in deep concentration. "We had an old boy back in Hole-in-the-Wall who was named junior, and his father's name was the same."

"I need your answer, Rocky."

"I'm gonna take a stab in the dark on this one, Bob. I think it would be Hank Williams."

"That's absolutely correct."

Bambi held up the applause sign and hung a number 2 on Rocky's podium.

From the back of the audience came, "Yee-haw, atta boy, Rocky."

"Okay, Professor, it's back to you one more time. This is a fill-in-the-blank. In the process known as photophosphorylation, the trapping of light energy occurs by the conversion of _____ to _____."

"Hmm, Bob, I believe that would be adenosine biphosphate to adenosine triphosphate."

“Oh, Professor, that was so close. The answer is adenosine diphosphate, not biphosphate. I’m sorry. I can’t give you that point.”

“That’s what I meant to say, Bob. It was just a slip of the tongue.”

Bambi grabbed the microphone and said, “A-a-a-w-w-w.”

“Okay, Rocky. It’s all up to you. If you get this point, you win the war. Are you ready?”

“I’m just filled with trepidation, Bob.”

“Hang in there, big guy. This is also a fill-in-the-blank. When a man manually removes the husk from the corn cob, he _____ the corn.”

Rocky fidgeted about, shifted from one foot to the other, and scratched his head. Then he tugged on his right ear, put his hands in his pockets, and closed his eyes.

“This is it, Rocky,” said Bob. “Don’t blow it.”

“Aw, shucks. I sure wish I ... I knew.”

“That’s it, Rocky ... ‘Shucks’. You are still our champion.”

Bambi held up the applause sign and hung a number 3 on Rocky's podium.

From out of the back of the audience came, "Yee-haw, atta boy, Rocky."

"Come on over here, Rocky. Hannah Mae, why don't you come on up here, too. Oh, come on now folks, let's hear it one more time for Morris 'Rocky' Calabash. Okay, let's see what you've won this time. Bambi, may I have the envelope, please. Oh, Rocky, this is nice. Real nice. You and your lovely wife, Hannah Mae, have won an all-expenses paid trip to the National Corn Shucking Contest. In addition to that, we also have for you, your very own, personalized 'Big Bucket of Raisins'."

"I'm too choked up to talk, Bob."

"Well, ladies and gentlemen, there you have it. Another week. Another returning champion. Remember, always use a big word when a small one would do. Until next time, from all of us here at Brain Wars, be good and love your mother!"