

Podcast: What If World

Episode: 002: What if I were to turn myself into a hamburger?

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Transcription by Keffy

[Rising harp scales followed by the What If World theme song.]

Lyrics: What if kittens played the glockenspiel? And what if unicorns were real? What if you could fly or travel back in time, we welcome you to What If World. What If World. This is What If World.

[Gentle bell music.]

Mr. Eric: Hey there folks, I'm Mr. Eric, and welcome back to What If World. What have you been wondering? I brought up a friend today. His name is Abacus P. Grumbler and he is a wizard.

Abacus, come on—

Gosh, I thought I saw him here just a minute ago, but now all I see is a floating pointy hat and a floating robe and a floating wand.

Abacus? Abacus? Where are you?

Abacus: I'm right here only I'm inviiiiiiiiiblllle.

Mr. Eric: Oh wow, you're almost entirely invisible, except your hat, your robe, and your wand. That's really impressive, Abacus.

Abacus: No, I'm, I'm supposed to be entirely invisible, but...

Mr. Eric: Oh, well, you're almost there, so good job, Abacus.

Abacus: Oh, well, oh, I can take... I can do it, I can do it. Let me just try again. [Clears throat.] Iiinvisibiliadoodaaah!

Mr. Eric: Invisibiliadoodah? Is that what you said? That doesn't really sound like a magic—

Abacus: I know what magic words are and I just cast one so clearly I am going to be invisible now.

Mr. Eric: Well, your robe, your hat and your wand are invisible now.

Abacus: Oh, wonderful. See, works like a charm.

Mr. Eric: But that's all that's invisible, Abacus. You're basically standing in your underwear.

[Record scratch]

Abacus: Oh, goodness, oh me. Aw well, that's a simple mix-up. I will do it again. Unnnseeeeabiliteeah.

Mr. Eric: Oh wow, great, now, Abacus, you're fully visible so we can get on with the podcast, huh?

Abacus: Uh, well, I was supposed to be fully invisible that time, but uh, I'm getting very close, as you can plainly see.

Mr. Eric: Yes, Abacus. You're getting really close. Congratulations, keep working on it, buddy. I'm sure you'll get it.

Abacus: Ah, thank you, thank you, yes. So what am I doing here? You brought me out of What If World just to sit around and show you my wonderful magic?

Mr. Eric: Uh, no, Abacus, actually, I brought you here today so that you could ask a question because that's what What If World needs to get started, right? It needs any kind of question and then it'll turn that question into a story just for you.

Abacus: Just for me?

Mr. Eric: Just for you.

Abacus: Oh, how wonderful. I have a whopper of a question. What if I, Abacus P. Grumbler, were to turn myself into... a hamburger?

Mr. Eric: Into a hamburger? Really? That's what you want to know?

Abacus: Yes. Well, because I oftentimes, uh, use magic mistakenly, and it's been a bit of a fear of mine. And I wonder if I were to turn into a hamburger, whether or not I'd be okay?

Mr. Eric: Oh, all right, well that makes a lot of sense. All right, What If World, let's answer Abacus's question.

Kids at home, when you hear this sound: [Rising harp scale.] That means we're all going to What If World together. I'll see you there!

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Once upon a time, there was a wizard named Abacus P. Grumbler and he was an awfully grumbly wizard, as you might imagine.

Abacus: [Grumbling] Another day in my tower. Ooh, with all these children I've got to teach magic to. Oh, why did I ever become a magic teacher?

Mr. Eric: He got up out of his bed and gave a good stretch.

Abacus: Oooh, what a good—[crash!] Oh!

Mr. Eric: He stretched out his arm a little too far and he knocked down his magic lamp.

[Magic whooshing and chiming noise.]

Out of that lamp whizzed out blue smoke and that smoke turned into a genie!

Genie: Hello. I am the Genie of the Lamp. What would you like?

Abacus: What would I like? Is that... is that your question?

Genie: No, I hadn't finished yet. I was going to ask, what would you like—

Abacus: Oh, I know what I would like. I would like a hamburger, please. I'm very hungry.

Genie: You would like to be a hamburger. Very well, your wish is my command—

Abacus: Oh, no, oh wait, I didn't actually want to be a hamburgeeeerrraaaah.

Genie: Your wish is my command. You should have let me finish the question. The question was: what would you like to be? Heh heh heh heh heh heh. You ought to be more careful what you wish for, Abacus. [Woosh.]

Mr. Eric: And with that, the genie turned back into blue mist and wisted away.

Abacus: Oh, hmm. Oh, this is not so bad. [Slurping noises]. I'm squishier than I really wanted to be. Well, I was an old wizard anyway so I guess I was getting rather squishy in the first place. All right, well, time to put on my wizard hat, and my wizard robe. Oh dear, it's not quite fitting the way it used to.

[Ripping noise.]

Mr. Eric: His wizard robe ripped!

Abacus: Oh, well, that's quite all right. I mean, I'm a hamburger. I'll be fine.

Mr. Eric: So he walked down the stairs and went through the door into his classroom. Uh oh. I thought he was going to through the door into his classroom, but with his wide hamburger body, he just got stuck there and all the kids looked at him.

[Various children laugh.]

And they laughed up a storm! And Abacus just sat there, squirming himself through the doorway.

Abacus: Uh, class, this is just a demonstration, today, of how magic used improperly can be quite an inconvenience! [Grunts.]

Mr. Eric: But fortunately, the grease from his hamburger patty helped him [whistle] slide right through that door and he sat down at his wizarding chair.

Abacus: All right, class. Let me see your homework. For your homework, you were all supposed to transmogrify three hard candies into three marshmallows. And then, let's see how you did.

Child: Um, okay. Um. Mr. Grumbler?

Abacus: That is Professor Wizard Grumbler, to you.

Child: Uh, yes. Professor Wizard Grumbler. I was just wondering, what happens if instead of turning hard candies into marshmallows, mmm, we ate them.

Abacus: Oh, right, I probably should have given you less of a delicious homework assignment. Who else here ate their homework?

Mr. Eric: And one by one, all the hands in the class raised.

Abacus: Oh dear. All right, well [clears throat], that's quite all right because I happen to be a hamburger so your new homework is an in-class assignment. Please turn me, your teacher, back into a wizard.

Mr. Eric: And one by one all the kids came up.

Child: Um, okay. So... I know. Um, abrac-a-[chomp chomp]-dabra!

Abacus: Ow! What are you doing?

Child: [With mouth full] I'm just trying to turn you back [om nom nom] in-class homework assignment.

Abacus: Excuse me! You do not eat your teacher, that is a very, very strict rule in my classroom. It's right up on the wall, see? Do not eat teacher. Do not eat magic wand. And also, don't turn yourself into food and then eat yourself. You see, it's very, very simple rules.

Child: Oh, okay. [Eating noises.]

Abacus: Get—get back to your chair. Excuse me! Dear! Who else thinks that they can heal the professor, for, after all, healing is the highest form of magic.

Mr. Eric: And another one of his students, a little mouse, raised his hand.

Abacus: Ah, yes. Mr. Mouser, come on up here and give it your best shot.

Mr. Mouser: Yes, okay. So, I really know how I'm going to get you to be better.

Abacus: Oh, that's delightful, because I'm fresh out of ideas. Do your best.

Mr. Mouser: All right, abraca-wheelies

Abacus: Abraca-wheelies, I'm not familiar with that spell. And—
[popping noises]

Mr. Eric: Four wheels grew on all four sides of the hamburger bun.

Abacus: That... what, what is this!? Now I'm just a hamburger bun with wheels! How do you think that's going to make me better?

Mr. Mouser: Uh, well, I think wheels make everything better. You see, if all the world had wheels, then we would be able to outrun the cats.

Abacus: Yes, but then the cats would have wheels, too, don't you see?

Mr. Mouser: Eh, well, I hadn't really thought of that. But anyway, you look really cool with wheels.

Abacus: Oh, do I? [Laughs]. That's—[grumbles loudly]. That's besides the point! I know I look cool with wheels but I want to be human again. Can anyone in this classroom please turn me human?

Mr. Eric: And a little girl at the back of the class raised her hand.

Zizi: Um, Professor?

Abacus: Yes, Zizi, you think you have an idea?

Zizi: Well, sort of. I actually don't think that any of us could turn you human again.

Abacus: Oh. Oh great, the voice of reason, as usual, thank you very much, Zizi.

Zizi: Uh, no, that's—I wasn't finished.

Abacus: What do you mean? If none of you can turn me human, then off with you! You'll all get a failing mark in this class today and I'll just go off on my own and see if I can find a potion or maybe a magical ketchup bottle that will turn me back.

Zizi: No, Professor, I think maybe if we all tried together, that might do the trick.

Abacus: Oh, you mean all of the students using all of their magic?

Zizi: Yes, Professor. Maybe even you could use your magic, too?

Abacus: Oh, but my magic's a little bit off sometimes. I mean, it's... of course it's very superior to the magic of a child, but—

Zizi: Professor, it's okay. We all make mistakes sometimes, but maybe if we all work together we can fix it.

Abacus: Oh, all right. [Whimpers] Let's give it a shot.
[Dramatic backing music.]

Mr. Eric: And all the students stood and raised their wands high.

Abacus: All right, class. Repeat after me. Ketchup-ka-ham and focus-frank-furger, turn this teacher back from a hamburger!

Children: [All together] Ketchup-ka-ham and focus-frankfurger, turn this teacher back from a hamburger!

Mr. Eric: And they all chanted together, and Abacus joined in with them again. And—in a swirl of ketchup, mustard, pickles, and melted cheddar cheese—
[Whoosh!]
Abacus P. Grumbler was back!

Abacus: Oh! Look at me! I'm not a hamburger anymore! Oh, class, you did such a wonderful job, oh thank you. Oh, thank you. Oh, you're all getting A-plus-plus-pluses today! My goodness, Zizi, you deserve

the highest grade of all for it was your idea to have us work together.

[Cheerful piano music]

Zizi: Yeah, it just seemed like common sense to me.

Abacus: Well, apparently common sense isn't all that common these days. Well done, Zizi and well done class.

All right, I've got a genie that I need to have some very serious words with. Oh, and class, if you ever encounter a genie in a puff of blue smoke, don't make any wishes with him, all right? That's just a warning.

Mr. Eric: So Abacus went back to teaching his class. Sometimes they would practice spells on their own, and whenever they got to a really tricky one, they'd try working together, teaching each other! I'll tell you what, that class went a lot better.

[Falling harp scale.]

And when you hear that sound, folks, if you haven't already figured it out, it means the story's over and you're back here with me in the studio. I hope you all had a fun time today. Abacus, did you like your story?

Abacus: Oh, it was wonderful. It's lovely that you and What If World can tell any sort of story. Gosh, I've got all sorts of ideas about different stories I want to hear.

Mr. Eric: I know, I know, Abacus. But, you've got to wait 'til next week.

Abacus: Oh, dear. Maybe I can cast a spell that will make it next week right now!

Mr. Eric: Abacus? Abacus... please, just... no more magic for today, okay?

Abacus: All right, fine.

Mr. Eric: I'd like to thank Karen Marshall, my editor and producer, as well as Craig Martinson who wrote our awesome theme.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme song plays.]

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