

Podcast: [What If World](#)

Episode: 20: What if a ferret chewed on a cookie in an orchestra?

File Length: 22:47

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.

Mr. Eric: Hey there folks and welcome back to What If World, the show where your questions and ideas inspire off the cuff stories. Today, we've got a question from Pierson.

Pierson: My name is Pierson from Riverview, Florida. I'm eight years old. I like coding and my black cat, Obsidian. My question is: what if a ferret chewed on a cookie in an orchestra?

Mr. Eric: Oh, man. Pierson, what a great question. You know what I really loved, is how much detail you gave. You told us about your cat and how you like coding, and then you gave a really complicated question, so I want to jump right into that story.

What if a ferret ate a cookie in an orchestra?

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Today's story starts not with that ferret but with a cat stalking its prey.

Obsidian: You thought you could escape me?

Mr. Eric: Said Obsidian the cat, pacing back and forth atop its favorite napping rug.

Obsidian: Well, little did you know, I am a master of the hunt!

Mr. Eric: The black cat spun on its prey, but it just stayed frozen.

Obsidian: I see, you are paralyzed by fear. Very well. I will make this quick for you [laughs]. Oh wait, I've got to get milk.

Mr. Eric: Obsidian the cat skittered out of the living room into the kitchen, leaving its prey, a little gingerbread cookie in the shape of a mouse, unguarded. As you can imagine, it took the cat several minutes to figure out how to pour the milk into the bowl. Quite a bit of that milk got all over the

kitchen. And then it took Obsidian even longer to push the bowl with its nose back into the living room.

Obsidian: Well, now, little gingerbread mouse cookie, you shall be mi—gingerbread mouse cookie? Where have you gone?

Mr. Eric: The cookie was nowhere in sight. There were just three little cookie crumbs left in its wake.

Obsidian: So, you've escaped me this time, cookie, but I will have the last laugh! Or at least I will tomorrow when my parents give me another cookie.
[Laughs] Oh wait, I'm late for rehearsal!

Mr. Eric: The little black cat rushed out the kitty door and ran all the way to the bandshell, a giant half-tortoise shell with a stage built underneath it. The bandshell was surrounded by row after row of stadium-stacked benches, but they were all empty.

Obsidian: I'm sorry I'm late for rehearsal, you see, I was trying to eat a cookie, but it got away from me.

Ferrevarius: Oh dear.

Mr. Eric: Said Ferrevarius, the violinist of this particular orchestra.

Ferrevarius: I'm so sorry to hear about your cookie.

Obsidian: Yes, I as well am sorry.

Ferrevarius: I once loved cookies myself. Of course, I cannot eat them anymore. They're no good for an old ferret.

Obsidian: How did you know about my cookie in the first place, Ferrvarius?

Ferrevarius: What? You just mentioned your cookie, like literally 15 seconds ago.

Obsidian: That's an awfully convenient tale, ferret.

Ferrevarius: It happens to be the truth. I would never want anything to happen to your precious cookies.

Obsidian: I'm having trouble figuring out whether you're telling the truth or not. We both have such sinister sounding voices.

Ferrevarius: Yes, we do, don't we. One of us is almost certainly a villain.

Obsidian: Of course, looks can be deceiving.

Ferrevarius: Obsidian, I think we're getting off track. We're keeping the whole orchestra waiting.

Obsidian: Yes, we wouldn't want that, now would we?

Mr. Eric: And so, Obsidian got to his piano and accompanied Ferrevarius and the rest of the orchestra as they rehearsed for their show.

[Classical music plays]

Ferrevarius: What a wonderful rehearsal that was, Obsidian.

Obsidian: Yes. You are truly a very gifted violinist, Ferrevarius.

Ferrevarius: You know, I can't help the way I talk. I actually mean to complement you right now.

Obsidian: Likewise. You are truly a gifted musician.

Ferrevarius: And you are perhaps the greatest pianist I have ever heard.

Mr. Eric: It went on like this for a while, but eventually Obsidian got home, and the next day, when it came to cookie time he was much more careful with his gingerbread mouse.

Obsidian: Mrow. Right. I'm just going to set up this little trap here.

Mr. Eric: He'd spent all morning tying bells to a long string, which he circled around the cookie.

Obsidian: Now, if anyone tries to free you or take you, they will surely be caught by these bells. They'll ring just like so.

Mr. Eric: And he batted the bell with his paw.

[Bell tinkles]

Obsidian: Yes. They'll ring with that little delightful tinkling sound. Like this!

[Even more bells tinkle]

Mr. Eric: And he batted the bells again, a little harder this time.

Obsidian: Yes, and then, surely, the fiend will be tangled up by the bells like so!

Mr. Eric: And Obsidian pounced on the bells and started kicking them and batting them this way and that.

[Bells jingle]

And rolling around in them and getting tangled up, all the while the bells ringing loudly and his eyes off the cookie.

Obsidian: And then, just when they're tangled beyond any hope of escape, I will pounce and—where's my cookie?

[Sad trombone]

Mr. Eric: The little gingerbread mouse was gone again, three tiny crumbs left in its wake.

Obsidian: My goodness, I'm late for rehearsal again!

Mr. Eric: Obsidian rushed to the bandshell once more.

Ferrevarius: Ever the tardy one, Obsidian.

Mr. Eric: Said Ferrevarius.

Ferrevarius: I hope nothing happened to your precious cookie!

Obsidian: But that's exactly what something did happen to, it.

Ferrevarius: Huh? I'm confused.

Obsidian: Yes. So am I.

Ferrevarius: And why are you covered in bells?

Obsidian: It was a trap I laid for the fiend who is stealing my cookies. The fiend, I suspect goes by the name of Ferrvarius!

Ferrevarius: Ferrevarius. Yes, I presumed you would blame me. But I've been here waiting for you. And like I said, I have quit cookies for they are bad for my old ferret belly.

Obsidian: We'll just see about that.

Ferrevarius: No, we won't. Because I won't eat a cookie.

Obsidian: Oh, won't you, then. Well, then we won't see about that, I supposed. Unless we do.

Ferrevarius: Obsidian, we're terribly, terribly late, and the show's tomorrow and we just really need you on the piano right now.

Obsidian: Very well, nemesis.

Ferrevarius: Nemesis? You think just because I have a wicked voice and am an ugly old ferret that I'm evil somehow?

Obsidian: Well, you know what they say. If the ferret fur fits.

Ferrevarius: No one says that. That's never a thing that's been said.

Obsidian: Until now.

[classical music plays in the background]

Mr. Eric: And it went on like that for a while, but eventually they finished their practice. The show was sounding really good, but Obsidian wasn't thinking about that. The little cat was rushing home to set an even more elaborate trap. He sprinkled dry, crunchy leaves all around where the cookie would go. He took down all the windchimes hanging outside the house and hung them in a circle, too. Then, he glued shut the windows with sparkly glitter glue that would take weeks to come off.

Obsidian: I'd just like to see someone try to get my cookie tomorrow.

Mr. Eric: And when the cookie came, Obsidian placed it in the middle of all the traps, and then he had an even better idea. He rushed over to the phone, batted it off the hook, and dialed the number of an old friend.

[Ring ring!]

JF Kat: Hello! It's me, JF Kat.

Obsidian: Hello, JF Kat. It's me, your old nemesis, Obsidian the cat.

JF Kat: What? We were never nemeses.

Obsidian: Really? I thought the way you talked and the way I talked, we'd just—

JF Kat: What? No. We were just two cats living in the same alley, but now I'm, you know, president of What If World and I'm a little busy right now.

Obsidian: Of course, of course. I just need to quickly borrow the entire What If World army.

JF Kat: What? Listen, Obsidian, I'm in the middle of peace talks between the werewolves and the whenwolves and they all actually found their way here on time for once.

[Howling in the background]

- Whenwolf: What time is it? Is it peace time?
- Wherewolf: Where are we? Is this the peace place?
- JF Kat: This is a once in a lifetime opportunity.
- Obsidian: Yes. Well, I might only have one last chance to catch this wicked villain.
- JF Kat: All right. All right. Explain to me what this supervillain is doing.
- Obsidian: Well, you see, I believe he's stolen two of my cookies.
- JF Kat: Stolen two of your cookies. The wherewolves and the whenwolves have been warring over when they can run in which dog park for as long as they can't remember and you want the entire army of What If World to catch a cookie thief.
- Obsidian: Well, an alleged cookie thief. But once I catch him, I'll know for sure.
- JF Kat: Okay, Obsidian. I answered the phone because we're good all friends.
- Whenwolf: How long is that cat going to talk for?
- Wherewolf: A cat? Where's the cat? I want to chase the cat!
- JF Kat: Oh geez. This is gonna go south pretty fast. Listen, just don't take your eye off the cookie and you should be fine. Or better yet, just eat the cookie.
- Obsidian: But Jojo, if I ate it, there would be no bait, and—
- [Wolves howling]
- Mr. Eric: But Jojo Fluffy Kat had already hung up.
- Obsidian: Don't take my eye off the cookie, well that advice is rather obviou—
- Mr. Eric: But he had taken his eye off the cookie for that whole conversation. And guess where it wasn't.
- Obsidian: My cookie! Gone again! Let me check the windows!
- Mr. Eric: And he got glittery glue all over his paws.
- Obsidian: No, they're still closed. Let me check the leaves!

Mr. Eric: And if there were any clues there, they got stuck to his glue-y paws.

Obsidian: Ooh, what about the windchimes?

Mr. Eric: And when he batted one of the chimes, they all fell down and got tangled up in his glue-y paws and fur!

Obsidian: Oh dear.

Mr. Eric: Can you guess what he was late for?

Obsidian: The show... oh dear, oh dear.

Mr. Eric: He ran as fast as his glittery, glue-y paws could take him, dragging 20 feet of windchimes in his wake. As he was approaching the bandshell, he could hear the orchestra tuning up in the distance.

Obsidian: Oh, thank goodness. They haven't started yet. I have just enough time to buy a cookie [laughs].

Mr. Eric: And Obsidian dragged himself, glue-y and glittery and covered in windchimes all the way up to his piano.

Ferrevarius: Obsidian, what has happened to you?

Obsidian: Wouldn't you like to know, Ferrevarius. Or wouldn't you already know because it's you that has done this to me?

Ferrevarius: What? How could you possibly think I—

Mr. Eric: But just then, the Mousetro lifted her wand.

Mousetro: Squeak squeak, squeak squeakity squeak.

Ferrevarius: It's weird that most animals can talk except for her.

Mousetro: Squeaaaak, squeak squeak squeeeaaaak.

Mr. Eric: Mousetro flashed her wand in their direction and they got the show underway. But Obsidian, tangled up, heavily glittered and having gone three days without a single cookie wasn't really playing his best.

[Classical music with discordant piano plunking]

Ferrevarius whispered to him.

Ferrevarius: I know it's hard going without cookies, but I will help you through this. I swear by my violin.

Mr. Eric: Obsidian squinted his eyes at the old ferret and reached into his tangle of windchimes to pull out that little gingerbread mouse cookie he'd bought outside the bandshell.

Obsidian: We shall see, old nemesis. [Laughs]

Mr. Eric: And he threw the cookie at the ferret's feet. The old ferret's eyebrows twitched wildly and he started playing some really bad notes on the violin.

[Mimicking bad violin notes]

His tail lashed towards the cookie, trying to bat it away, but it just looked too delicious. The old ferret dropped his violin in a clatter and pounced after the cookie, which suddenly stood up on its little mousey legs and skittered away.

Ferrevarius: No, cookie! I must eat you. I cannot resist anymore.

Mr. Eric: Obsidian looked on, his shameful joy turning to confusion as the ferret chased the cookie all through the orchestra.

Elephant: A gingerbread mouse!

Mr. Eric: Trumpeted the elephant trumpeter.

Monkey: Ooh ooh oh ooh

Mr. Eric: Cried a little cymbal-playing monkey.

[Various dismayed animal noises]

Mousetro: Squeak squeak squeak squee-ee-eeak!

Mr. Eric: Even the Mousetro was getting flustered. The whole show was falling apart.

Obsidian: I think maybe this was a bad idea.

Mr. Eric: Said Obsidian, suddenly running after Ferrevarius.

Obsidian: Ferrevarius, please! Let the little mouse go. Let's just finish the show.

Ferrevarius: But I miss cookies so much.

Obsidian: I'm sorry. I didn't know these cookies could come alive and run away.

Ferrevarius: But there's a warning on the packages!

Mr. Eric: Ferrevarius had only managed to capture the little plastic wrapper for the cookie.

Ferrevarius: It says, warning: evil monologues may bring to life.
[Sad trombone]

Obsidian: Oh dear.

Mousetro: Squeak squeak squeak SQUEAK.

Mr. Eric: Mousetro had walked up to the two of them, gesturing at them with her wand and then pointing at the exit.

Ferrevarius: But Mousetro, it wasn't—

Obsidian: Mousetro, I'm to blame for—

Mousetro: Squeak-squeak SQUEEEAK!

Mr. Eric: They noticed then that the whole audience was booing. They'd come from far and wide and paid good money to enjoy an orchestra, not a fiasco. Obsidian and Ferrevarius left the bandshell and started back to the kitty's house.

Obsidian: Well, I've certainly learned that two wrongs don't make a right.

Ferrevarius: But I didn't do anything wrong. I just can't resist a delicious cookie.

Mr. Eric: As they walked back, they suddenly heard a pitter-patter behind them. When they turned around, they saw that little gingerbread mouse. It was following them.

Ferrevarius: Mouse. This is all your fault!

Obsidian: Ferrevarius, you just said yourself, two wrongs don't make a right.

Ferrevarius: But I just really want a cookie.

Mr. Eric: At that, the little gingerbread mouse perked its ears.

Cookie Mouse: [Muffled humming]

Obsidian: So, wait. Some mice can speak and some can squeak, but others can only hum?

Mr. Eric: The little mouse dashed off ahead of them.

Ferrevarius: I think it wants us to follow!

Mr. Eric: They ran all the way back to Obsidian's house, through the kitty door and over to a tiny hole in the wall. The gingerbread mouse bounded up and down and then squeezed through the whole.

Cookie Mouse: [Muffled humming]

Mr. Eric: There was just enough room for them to both peek through at the same time. All four little gingerbread mice looked like they were typing on tiny cookie computers.

Ferrevarius: That was not what I expected.

Mr. Eric: The four mice were typing line after line of letters and numbers and symbols all of which made very little sense to Obsidian and Ferrevarius. While the two of them waited to find out what the mice were working on, Ferrevarius helped untangle Obsidian from all the wind chimes and brushed out as much glittery glue as he could. Then, Obsidian cooked them a pair of fancy filets, very healthy for a carnivorous cat and ferret.

Ferrevarius: That was a delicious meal.

Mr. Eric: Said Ferrevarius.

Obsidian: Why, thank you. I'm just sorry I can't give you anything for dessert.

Ferrevarius: I understand.

Mr. Eric: Just then, there was a beep boop! A notification to Ferrevarius's smart phone. He pulled it out of his belt pouch.

Ferrevarius: What's this? I've been invited to download an app called Cookie Chase?

Mr. Eric: All four mice had snuck out of their tiny hole.

Cookie Mice: [Multiple muffled humming noises]

Ferrevarius: You're telling me you four mice just created this game?

Cookie Mice: [Muffled humming]

Obsidian: Well, let's try it.

Mr. Eric: It was a really pretty little puzzle game where you had to solve the mystery of the missing cookie.

Obsidian: You know, if we wrote a score for this game—

Ferrevarius: It could be one of the most beautiful educational games ever!

Obsidian: You know, it still sounds evil when you say it that way.

Ferrevarius: Well, I can't really help that. But would you want to work with me anyway?

Obsidian: What? Of course. Nothing would give me greater pleasure in all of What If World.

Ferrevarius: Yes, you see, that sounds quite evil as well.

Obsidian: These mouse sound really cute, but they were playing tricks on me for days.

Ferrevarius: Tricks? They were running for their lives.

Cookie Mice: [Muffled humming]

Mr. Eric: They went on like that for quite a while, as you can imagine. But before long, Obsidian, Ferrevarius and the four gingerbread mice had finished coding their first game and were working on their second.

Obsidian: And to think, none of this ever would have happened if I hadn't been terribly suspicious.

Ferrevarius: It could have easily happened. Maybe without all of this drama.

Cookie Mice: [Muffled humming]

Mr. Eric: The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: It seems like some friends just like to bicker, huh? I kind of want to play that game. Too bad I'm no good at coding. I'd like to thank Pierson for his great question. Really, you knocked it out of the park, buddy. And I'd like to thank Karen Marshall, my editor and producer. Craig Martinson, my theme song writer. And all you little coders and musicians out there. I hope you all never stop learning and creating.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme song plays.]

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