

Podcast: [What If World](#)

Episode: 53 What If? (The Musical!)

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Transcription by Keffy

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. I'm Mr. Eric and I'm here with...

Mr. Chris:              Mr. Chris.

Mr. Eric:                Mr. Chris! You all don't know this, but Mr. Chris and I used to be, I don't know... comrades in theater.

Mr. Chris:              Yeah.

Mr. Eric:                Yeah, yeah. In children's theater, in fact. We... he ran the theater and I tried to bring it down from the inside.

Mr. Chris:              Oh... no.

Mr. Eric:                It didn't work. It's still going strong. Stick around to the end and you're going to hear all about Star Caberet, which is something that Mr. Chris, here, does in the LA County and beyond. It's really awesome. But he's here with me today because he's much more talented, musically than I am. He's going to—

Mr. Chris:              Oh, stop.

Mr. Eric:                Oh no, I won't. He's—he writes musicals all the time, original ones for kids. And he's going to do just a little mini version of that for us today in a quick, fun, story. But first, we need to hear our question.

Leah:                    Hi, I'm Leah from Milwaukee and I'm six years old. And I like The Little Mermaid and what if Poppa Loo and Mamma Jamma and Zach and Zizi all got separated in different fairy tales. Bye! Thank you.

Mr. Eric:                Wow! Leah. I love that question! Mr. Chris, what do you think about that?

Mr. Chris: That is an amazing question.

Mr. Eric: I agree. I am so excited to do real fairy tales because that's sort of how I got my start with stories in the first place. So you know what, let's get right into it.

[Rising harp scale.]

Once upon a time, Zach, Zizi, Mamma Jamma and Poppa Loo were planning a family vacation.

Mamma Jamma: Oh, well, I think we should go to some place sunny for sure.

Poppa Loo: Well, there, Dear. I was hoping maybe for a change we could just go someplace really quiet and well lit where I can get a lot of reading done. Like a basement, somewhere.

Zach: Oh, I don't want to go to a basement, Dad. That was our last vacation.

Zizi: I know that I haven't said anything yet, but I was hoping maybe we could go to What If Land. It's the most magical place in What If World.

Mamma Jamma: Oh, that sounds nice. Poppa Loo, what do you think about--?

Poppa Loo: Could we just, for once, have separate vacations? These kids are practically grown up, and...

Mamma Jamma: What?

Zizi: Huh?

Mamma Jamma: Oh no, we can't do separate vacations. I mean, I think that's criminal neglect or something.

Fairy: Excuse me, could I uh, intrude for a moment here.

Poppa Loo: What's this oversized fairy doing in our living room?

Fairy: Yeah, I don't really think it's very polite to point out my... my... that I'm oversized. But I was kind of hoping you guys could keep your voices down because I'm trying to enjoy a latte.

Zach: That's cool. I was wondering why you're in our house, though?

Fairy: I'm here for the lattes. They're delicious.

Mamma Jamma: Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't tell you kids. I've been making lattes on the side. It's just a little side biz. Make some money for the family. And this nice fairy came up. He was my first customer... and my only customer.

Fairy: Oh, I'm not a nice fairy. I'm a trickster fairy.

Zizi: Uh, you shouldn't admit to being a trickster fairy, because then we know that you're gonna play a trick on us.

Fairy: Eh, you were gonna find out anyway. I've already started my trick.

Poppa Loo: Wow. This guy's good. So what is it? Are you gonna... the latte's gonna... spoiled milk or something? This is a delight.

Fairy: No, I'm gonna send you off into separate fairy tales. Bye.

Mr. Eric: And just like that, Jenkins, the trickster fairy snapped his fingers and Zach and Zizi's house melted away, and they found themselves in a dark, spooky forest.

[Wolf howls]

Zach: Zizi, is this our vacation?

Zizi: Yeah, Zach. I think we finally got our separate vacations, just like Poppa Loo wanted.

Zach: Well, do you think that What If Land is nearby?

Zizi: I don't know, Zach, but maybe we should leave a trail of bread crumbs or something in case we get lost.

Zach: I don't really see what the purpose of bread crumbs would be... we don't have any point of reference. We just appeared here in the middle of the—

Zizi: Okay, you know? I'm just trying to be proactive here.

Zach: Okay. Bread crumbs. Bread crumbs it is.

Mr. Eric: And so, they took the last of their breakfast and split it up into little bread crumbly pieces and made a trail as they headed deeper into the forest. As they got farther and farther into that deep and scary forest, they started to smell something quite delicious.

Zach: Oh, Zizi. I wish we hadn't thrown away the rest of our breakfast to make a trail of bread crumbs.

Zizi: Zach, are you criticizing my plan again, already.

Zach: No, no, I just mean that I'm hungry and it smells kind of like... gingerbread.

Mr. Eric: And Zach and Zizi darted off in the direction of that delicious smell until they heard a voice:

Spike: Don't do it, kids!

Zach: Wha?

Zizi: What?

Spike: My name's Spike, I'm your collective conscience. I don't think you should go in that house, kids. I know it's made of gingerbread, but it's probably dangerous.

Mr. Eric: Said Spike, a rock and roll cricket in a leather trench coat with a brutal axe at his side. That's what crickets call guitars.

Zach: With all due respect, we're hungry.

Zizi: Yeah, we're just gonna kind of check things out, okay. We won't necessarily go in.

Spike: Dude, there's a Denny's like three blocks away. You don't need to go to that gingerbread house. Come see my band!

Zizi: Yeah, we'll pop right back in on that and and uh...

Mr. Eric: Zach and Zizi took off in the direction of the gingerbread house, leaving Spike in their dust. And Zach and Zizi got to the gingerbread house, and with a knock [knock knock knock] the door creaked open. [Creaking noise].

Old Woman: Well, hello there, children. Come right on in. I'm making a children—po—Chicken pot pie right now.

Zach: Chicken pot pie? That sounds delicious.

Zizi: I think that maybe she wants to eat us.

Old Woman: Eat you? Why, I couldn't even finish you. I'd have to save some of you for leftovers, I mean... I wouldn't eat you!

Zach: See, Zizi. She says she wouldn't eat us.

Zizi: I don't know, Zach. It sounds a little iffy to me. Maybe we should go and check out that guy's band.

Mr. Eric: At this point, the old lady at the door, who was kind of made of green frosting for a face and had black licorice hair, leaned over towards the children and crooked her finger of candy cane towards them.

Old Woman: Oh, just come in for a moment. You won't regret it long. I mean, at all.

Mr. Eric: Just then, swinging valiantly from a vine and crashing the door closed came Spike.

Spike: Waaaaaaaaa!

Old Woman: Ow, you smooshed my frosting nose.

Mr. Eric: Came the muffled sound of the witch from inside the house. Zach and Zizi turned around to make their escape, but the door flung wide again and the witch raised her candy cane fingers to cast a wicked spell...

[Scene change noise]

But let's find out what's happening with Mamma Jamma.

After Jenkins the fairy snapped his finger, Mamma Jamma found herself deep under the sea.

Mamma Jamma: Oh my gosh, I'm a mermaid! It's a dream come true. Zach, Zizi, look at m—

Mr. Eric: But Zach and Zizi weren't around.

Mamma Jamma: Oh. Poppa Loo?

Mr. Eric: No sign of him, either.

Mamma Jamma: Oh dear. I better go find my children. What use is it being a beautiful mermaid.

Eel: Who said anything about beautiful?

Mr. Eric: Came a deep, croaking voice from behind her.

Mamma Jamma: Oh no you didn't.

Mr. Eric: Mamma Jamma spun on the voice to find a giant electric eel bending left and right and sparking blasts in her direction.

Mamma Jamma: What, do you think I'm supposed to be scared of you?

Eel: I'm just saying, if you think you're a beautiful mermaid, then I'm a scholarly blue whale.

Mamma Jamma: Oh, well, that's good for you. I mean, education is really important.

Eel: No, I'm speaking facetiously. Like I'm being phony. Like I don't think that that's... ugh. Anyway, you want to find your kids? I'm like an underwater wizard. I can help you.

Mamma Jamma: Well, sure! Yeah, why didn't you lead with that rather than being rude.

Eel: Well, here's the thing. I can turn you back into a human because your kids, they're just up shore lost in a forest somewhere.

Mamma Jamma: Oh, that would be just splendid.

Eel: I'm not finished. I'm gonna need something from you in return: your voice.

Mamma Jamma: My voice?

Eel: All you gotta do is start singing and your voice comes right to me. Then you get to see your family again.

Mr. Eric: And Mamma Jamma, despite her better judgment, started to sing.

[Jaunty piano backing starts]

Mamma Jamma: [Singing] If you wanna try and stop me, you can go to town. Not a thing you do or say will ever quiet me down. You can float there underwater casting spells if that's your choice. But you're never gonna take away my voice.

[Speaking] Ooh, I just love those steel drums. [Steel drums and flutes in the backing music]

[Singing] I can tell you think you're scary and you're magic's real. But my mother didn't raise me to be bossed around by eels. So you better just give up and find your own delightful noise. 'Cause you're never gonna take away my... never gonna take away my... never gonna take away my voice! [Glass breaking]

[Scene change noise]

Mr. Eric: Meanwhile, deep in a well.

Poppa Loo: Uh, anybody up there? Hello? I'm... I'm a dad stuck in a well. It's not as tragic as a child, but it's still awfully inconvenient. Hello?

Mr. Eric: And just then, he saw a glint of light off of a gleaming tiara that seemed to be hovering over the well.

Poppa Loo: Is somebody up there? Can you hear me?

Princess: What are you doing down there?

Poppa Loo: What, you've just been letting me sit here and stew in this well. Why don't you help me already?

Princess: Now is that the way you ask for help? That's just plain rude.

Poppa Loo: Right, right... um... pretty please, with sugar on top, GET ME OUT OF THIS WELL!

Princess: Mm... not quite, but you're getting closer.

Poppa Loo: I know. If you get me out of this well, I'll... I'll write a song for you.

Princess: You will?

Poppa Loo: Yeah, I've been working on my chops. Practicing piano every now and then and I think I could do a really swell job.

Princess: Well, I'll tell you what. Before I get you out of that well, I'm gonna bring a piano down there so you can sing me a song. And if you sing me a real good song, I'll pull you out with the piano.

Poppa Loo: Oh, for crying out! [Frustrated growl]

[Scene change noise]

Mr. Eric: Meanwhile, Zach and Zizi were trying to make good on their escape.

Zach: Excuse me, casting spells on children, I'm pretty sure it's illegal.

Witch: Illegal, you say? Well, who's going to stop me?

Zizi: Actually, I think we'll probably just close the door and walk away.

Zach: Isn't your magic most powerful in your witch house and since we didn't go in there, we're kind of safe.

Witch: Who told you that? That's definitely... that's not how it works at all. No. Come in here, and I will show you that my magic is no more powerful in this house than outside of it.

Spike: Don't do it!

Zach: I think we kind of had it figured out already, Spike.

Spike: Man, you kids are smart. You inspired me to write another song. You want to hear it?

[Heavy metal scream, followed by energetic rock song backing (guitar, drums, bass)]

[Singing] It's easy to be like Zach and Zizi, leaving trails of bread crumbs in the countryside. Don't be hasty you'll want to get home safely. It's fine to go explore but when you find the witch's door, don't go inside. Don't go inside. Don't go insii-iii-iiide. Don't go inside. Don't go inside. Hey ranger, watch out for stranger danger, be smart like Zach and Zizi and stay on your own side. Be wary if something seems too scary be quiet as a mouse and if you see a witch's house don't go inside. Don't go inside. Don't go inside. Don't go inside.

Witch: Oh, rock and roll music, my one weakness. Well, also water. And ovens. But I'm glad we didn't get to that point. The rock and roll music was enough.

Mr. Eric: And after the song finished playing, the wicked witch's gingerbread house collapsed and there was nothing left inside.

Spike: Hey, it's safe to eat it now, kids.

Zach: So, you're saying we should eat this candy off the ground.

Spike: Hey man, just the pieces that aren't touching dirt.

Mr. Eric: And so Zach and Zizi had a nice little snack and went off to find their parents.

Spike: You're welcome.

[Scene change noise]

Eel: All right, now I've got your voice forever!

Mr. Eric: Said the big, slimy electric eel.



Mamma Jamma: Oh no! Oh. No you don't.

Eel: Oh no. It didn't work. I really thought I knew magic.

Mamma Jamma: Wait, are you telling me you can't give me human legs?

Eel: Um... I'm telling you that the magic was in you all along?

Mamma Jamma: Is that really the lesson here?

Eel: I really have no idea. Can you just get out of my gooey undersea dwelling? I'd prefer to be left alone.

Mr. Eric: And Mamma Jamma started swimming towards the surface.

Mamma Jamma: You know, being alone isn't all it's cracked up to be.

Mr. Eric: She said as the water got lighter and lighter.

Mamma Jamma: Why don't you come meet my family. We've never had a pet eel.

Eel: I'm nobody's pet!

Mr. Eric: Said the eel. But he was swimming beside Mamma Jamma afterall.

Mamma Jamma: Okay. Well, we'll just see.

[Scene change noise]

Mr. Eric: Poppa Loo was riding a piano.

Poppa Loo: Okay, well. Um. Thank you for lowering this piano down here. I will absolutely play you a song, but really I think I need to have a nice dinner at your castle. You know, have a nice nap. Then I'll probably be good for a song.

Princess: I'm sorry, my dear. That wasn't the deal. I'm gonna need a song before I lift you out of that well, end of story.

Poppa Loo: Uh, you're really putting me on the spot, here. Okay. Um. [Clears throat] [Off-key singing] La la laaa, this princess won't get me out of her well. I think she trapped me on purpose and it's just as well that I rhyme those words together because they're the same word.

Okay, get me out.

Princess: You know, Poppa Loo. They say you should write what you know. Maybe you should spend some time thinking about why you're a frog, why you're in a well, and how you're gonna do better next time.

Mr. Eric: Just then, Poppa Loo heard a flapping, flopping sound from outside the well.

Mamma Jamma: Oh, hey there. Is that my husband you've got trapped in your well?

Mr. Eric: It was Mamma Jamma, still a mermaid, just flopping around. She'd found herself all the way up this hill.

Princess: You didn't tell me you were married.

Poppa Loo: What, does that change our arrangement? I wasn't gonna marry you or anything, I just... I want to get... I'm stuck in a well!

Zizi: Mom, you're a mermaid!

Mr. Eric: Shouted Zizi, running out of the woods towards her mother.

Zach: Zizi, wait up!

Mr. Eric: Zach trailed behind.

Mamma Jamma: Poppa Loo, we all found our way out of our fairy tales pretty easily, but you're still stuck at like the very first part of yours.

Poppa Loo: Well, that's not my fault. This princess is just being totally unreasonable.

Zach: Um, she probably has a name, Poppa Loo.

Poppa Loo: I mean, of course she has a name. Uh... hey princess lady, who are you?

Princess: It sounds like you were making some assumptions about me based on this tiara. I'm not necessarily a princess just because I'm wearing a tiara. I'm just dressed up to go out on the town.

Poppa Loo: Oh, wow. Do you think maybe you made some presumptions about me because I look like a frog. Not all frogs are rude, I presume. I just happen to be a rude one.

Princess: Well, how did you get turned into a frog, sweetheart?

Poppa Loo: How should I know? What's with the third degree, here.

Mr. Eric: And as Poppa Loo spoke, he got slimier and wartier.

Poppa Loo: Oh geez. You know what, I think I finally got that song idea.

[Piano ballad backing]

[Singing] If you don't want to be green slimy waiting for a princess to kiss you. Then don't forget to say please and thank you and when you blow your nose use a tissue. When your grandma stops by, get up and say hi. Don't sit like a bump on a log 'cause if you're rude like that, Poppa Loo dude, then someday you might get turned into a frog.

Backing singers: [Singing] Oooh...

Poppa Loo: [Singing] Turned into a frog.

Backing singers: [Singing] Turned into a frog.

Poppa Loo: [Singing] Turned into a frog.

Backing singers: [Singing] Ooh...

Poppa Loo: [Singing] Oh, my. Turned into a frog.

Backing singers: [Singing] Turned into a frog.

Poppa Loo: Ribbit.

Princess: That was a beautiful song, Poppa Loo.

Poppa Loo: Of course it was a beautiful song, I sang it. But you know what else I learned while I was making up that song? I should learn things about people. So would you please tell me your name?

Penelope: Well, my name is Penelope. You grab onto that piano, sugar, and I'm gonna lift you right out of that well.

Mr. Eric: And so Poppa Loo rode the piano right out of the well and was finally reunited with his family.

Mamma Jamma: Oh, this is so delightful! Although being a mermaid isn't all it's cracked up to be.

Zach: I don't know, Mom. You kind of make a cool mermaid. Oh, no. You're slimy.

Poppa Loo: Yeah, I got here. I'm still a frog. I mean, we figured out this fairy tale riddle, why are we all still stuck this way?

Zizi: Uh, Jenkins, can you hear us?

Jenkins: Oh, hey guys. Did you have fun?

Mamma Jamma: Oh, I had a wonderful time. I even made an electric eel friend, but well, he's back in the water because he's not amphibious like me.

Poppa Loo: I had a terrible time. I'm a slimy, gross, warty frog! Can you please fix us?

Jenkins: Yeah, sure. You know, I'm not just a trickster fairy. I'm also a treatster fairy. So I'll turn you back into a Poppa Loo and I'll give you all some Sour Patch Kids.

Zach & Zizi: Yay!

Mamma Jamma: Oh, hooray.

Poppa Loo: Well, then it was all worth it, I guess.

Mr. Eric: And with a snap of his fingers, Jenkins turned Poppa Loo and Mamma Jamma back to their normal selves. And when the family looked around, it was like they'd never left their house in the first place. The only difference, a little eel in a fish bowl on their table.

Eel: Hey, Mamma Jamma, I don't mind being a small eel, but, could you get me a nicer fish tank.

Mamma Jamma: Jenkins, can you get him a nicer fish tank.

Jenkins: Uh... if you give me another latte.

Mr. Eric: And so, Mamma Jamma made another latte and Jenkins gave that eel the biggest fish tank you've ever seen.

[Falling harp scale.]

Wow, Mr. Chris, that was a really fun story.

Mr. Chris: Yeah, that was a lot of fun.

Mr. Eric: Thank you so much for coming on our show. I know the kids are going to love it. I'd also like to thank Karen Marshall, my editor and producer. Craig Martinson, who wrote our original theme song, which is still awesome. And Jason O'Keeffe for our new artwork. And I'd like to thank all you kids at home for being careful and kind whenever you're in a new situation.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme song plays.]