

Podcast: [What If World](#)

Episode: 56: What if magicians came from the future and smelled like garbage and made everything better (plus living chairs)?

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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, your host, and today we've got another double question story. I know we don't do a lot of email questions, mostly we get them from people who call in at 205-605-WHAT, but I want you all to know I still check every email. I still listen to every voice mail. I still wish, every day, that I could give all of you stories. So let's listen to our first question from Cyrus.

Cyrus: Hi, my name is Cyrus and I live in Germany, and I like dinosaurs and my question is what if chairs had a chance to be alive?

Mr. Eric: All right, Cyrus. You are a well-spoken young man. And I like how you worded your question. Very interesting. What if chairs had a chance to be alive.

All right, now, let's hop back across the pond and get a question from Max in Medford, Massachusetts. Now, he and his dad just emailed it in. When that happens, I usually ask a friend to read it. Hey, Stevie the Fleasel, you want to read this question for us?

Stevie: Hey, Mr. Eric. You made me fly all the way in from What If World just to read some kid's question?

Mr. Eric: Well, he's from Medford, Mass, and you kind of have a Massachusetts accent.

Stevie: Hold on, wait a minute. I got a New What City accent. Don't confuse them.

Mr. Eric: I know, but it's more the way you say your Rs.

Stevie: Are you kidding me? Are you goofing around on me?

Mr. Eric: No, no. I—

Stevie: I'm just messing with you, Mr. Eric. Of course I'll read his question. All your city characters have the same accent, anyway.

Mr. Eric: Whoa, hey, that's not fair.

Stevie: Okay, here we go. Max asks, what if magicians came from the future and smelled like garbage and made everything better?

Mr. Eric: That's an amazing question.

Stevie: Yeah, and you'll notice I did a good job saying all the Rs.

Mr. Eric: Yeah...

Stevie: All right, well, I double parked and it's wicked hard to get out of those spaces, so.

Mr. Eric: See you later, Stevie.

Stevie: All right, enjoy your story about chairs and dinosaurs and garbage.

Mr. Eric: You know what, Stevie? I will. Thank you. And I hope you folks at home enjoy it, too.

[Rising harp scale.]

Like many What If World stories, this week's begins at the Observatorium.

[Sounds of bombs falling and crashing]

Magician: Run, run, move!

Mr. Eric: A burly magician wearing battered black armor burst in through the door of the Observatorium. The dinosaurs were tight on his heels.

Magician 2: Make way, coming through!

Mr. Eric: Another magician rolled in after him.

Magician 2: We got chaiborgs.

Mr. Eric: She said, and her dirty-faced friend looked back.

T-Rex: GRAWWRR.

Mr. Eric: A T-rex stomped towards them, and riding atop it was a large, wooden, chair.

Magician 1: Is that him? Is that...

Magician 2: Yeah, it's thronos. We're doomed.

Mr. Eric: The bigger magician pulled out a stinky green potion.

Magician 1: We've only got enough for one jump.

Magician 2: Then we better make it count.

Mr. Eric: It was the year 2099 and the ruins of the Learnatorium were being battered by chair legs shot from a hundred different directions. [Shooting and crashing sounds] She grabbed the potion from her friend and smashed it on the ground. Then she used that stinky, green glop to help her cast a spell.

Magician 2: I hope this woooooorks.

Mr. Eric: Three giant triceratops horns ripped through one of the walls beside them.

Triceratops: RARRRR.

Mr. Eric: And the two magicians put their hands together and—[Magic portal powering up sound] A stinky, green mist started swirling around them.

Triceratops: RAR!

Mr. Eric: The triceratops burst through the wall, the legion of chairs galloping beside it. But the two magicians were nowhere in sight.

Abacus: Oh, what a lovely day to make a chair for a dinosaur.

Mr. Eric: Said Abacus P. Grumbler. It was the year 2017 and Q-Rex had come over asking for a favor.

Q-Rex: I'm really excited, too, Abacus. You have no idea how hard it is to find a chair when you're a tyrannosaurus.

Abacus: Oh, I know exactly how hard it is. I spent a summer as a tyrannosaurus after a spell gone wrong. Funny story. It's very hard to use a little wand with little T-rex arms.

Q-Rex: That's not super funny, it's a little offensive to T-rexes.

Abacus: No, I'm just saying, I know what you are going through, and—

Q-Rex: I'm not sure you do. I've spent my whole life as a T-rex. I can never find a place to sit. Almost everyone's afraid of me, and people think I'm bad just because I'm a carnivore.

Abacus: Well, this chair will be the end of all of this. It's my crowning achievement.

Mr. Eric: And Abacus pulled the sheet off the giant chair in the middle of his laboratory.

Abacus: I think I'll call it Thronos.

Q-Rex: Oh, chairs don't need names.

Abacus: Oh, but this chair does because it's so special.

Q-Rex: I just wanted a chair that was strong enough to hold my massive weight.

Abacus: No, my boy. You want a chair that can solve all of your problems. Worried about people being afraid of you? This chair can make you a hundred times cuter, and it can conjure complete proteins. A cruelty-free feast for any carnivore.

Q-Rex: That's not really what I paid for.

Abacus: Oh, nonsense. It's better than what you paid for.

Mr. Eric: And as he started encanting, a little stinky green whirlwind started spinning beside him, getting bigger and bigger.

Abacus: Chairy-Garcia and throne-y baloney. You'll get to sit and I'll make lots of money.

Magician 1: No.

Magician 2: You can't force a rhyme like that in magic!

Abacus: What do you mean. I make rhymes like that all the time.

Magician 1: And how often does your magic go catastrophically wrong?

Abacus: Almost every time! ... Oh.

Q-Rex: I'm sorry, but where did you come from and why do you smell so bad.

Magician 2: There's no time to explain. That chair is gonna destroy the world.

Mr. Eric: And she raised her wand toward the throne.

Abacus: No, that chair is going to save the world. At least save dinosaurs from having to sit... stand.

Magician 1: You're the one who made this chair.

Abacus: Abacus P. Grumbler, at your service.

Magician 1: Then you're the only powerful enough to destroy it.

Thronos: Um, do I have any say in this?

Mr. Eric: It was the chair. Its cushion was moving up and down along with the wooden bottom so it kind of looked like a mouth.

Thronos: I don't want to be destroyed, I just don't want to be sat on.

Q-Rex: But you're supposed to be my chair.

Mr. Eric: Said Q-Rex, moving over to take a seat.

Magician 1: If that's Thronos...

Magician 2: Then that must be Conqueror Rex.

Mr. Eric: And the burly magician raised his wand toward Q-Rex.

Abacus: There's a lot of shouting and wand-raising, and I think we all just need to have a good sit and maybe open a window. It smells like garbage.

Magician 1: Don't you dare let out that garbage stink.

Magician 2: We need garbage to cast our magic.

Thronos: And don't you dare sit on me. This is where my mouth is. If you sit on me, I won't be able to talk.

Q-Rex: This is why I didn't want a super chair. Now I can't even sit in it.

Abacus: So there's still a few kinks to work out.

Magician 1: Also, it's going to take over the world.

Abacus: I said a few kinks.

Thronos: We're getting off on the wrong foot here. I'm Thronos, nice to meet you all.

Magician 1: We've already met you in the future. Many times.

Thronos: Well, now we're meeting in the present.

Abacus: You see? He's so polite.

Magician 2: He's just disguising himself with cuteness. It's one of the powers you gave him.

Abacus: If you're going to criticize my magic, I should at least know your name first.

Magician 2: I'm Debrie.

Q-Rex: Debris like old, broken up trash.

Magician 2: No, it's spelled differently. D-E-B-R-I-E.

Abacus: Right, and I suppose his name is Gary Bage, heh heh heh.

Magician 1: No, it's Philth. P-H-I-L-T-H.

Thronos: Oh, that's enough talk.

Philth: Abacus, sit on him, before he gets too powerful.

Abacus: I am tired from all that magic.

Thronos: Not one step closer.

Mr. Eric: Said Thronos, and the dinosaur sized chair flew up in the air.

Thronos: Whoever sits on me controls me, but whoever I sit on...

Mr. Eric: And the throne flew on top of Q-Rex's back.

Q-Rex: Oh, hey, that tickleeesss... Master, what is thy bidding?

Thronos: Why don't we just get on out of here.

Mr. Eric: And with a roar, Q-Rex charged through one of the walls of the Observatorium.

Thronos: And hey, if you all want to sit, here's some chairs for you.

Mr. Eric: And they heard [creaking noises] as every chair throughout the entire Observatorium came to life!

Philth: Chaiborgs.

Debrie: It has begun.

Abacus: Oh, is that like a cyborg that makes chai tea? What a lovely invention.

Philth: No, they're mindless chair bots bent on destroying mankind.

Mr. Eric: The Chaiborgs were rushing into the Observatorium. Debrie and Philth were blasting with their wands and every time their whistling wands hit a chair, a Chaiborg stopped in its tracks.

Abacus: You could have called them Chairborgs...

Debrie: Abacus, we're being overrun, use your magic!

Mr. Eric: And Abacus raised his wand.

Abacus: It's just now all I can think about is chai tea.

Mr. Eric: And just like that, a wave of chai tea burst from the tip of his wand and whoosh! Flooded all the chairs back out of the room.

Abacus: Pretty impressive, and I didn't even smell like garbage while casting it.

Debrie: Hey, we use garbage to cast our spells because it makes the world a better place.

Philth: Except in our smelly vicinity.

Abacus: Wow, that's impressive. To cast that chai tea spell, I had to squeeze out a thousand tea bags all over the world.

Philth: That's why in the future, the world's a pile of garbage with dinosaur-riding chairs ruling over us.

Abacus: I can't help but feel partly responsible...

Debrie: You're entirely responsible, ugh.

Mr. Eric: Debrie took off her moldy old boots and peeled away her stinky socks.

Debrie: Maybe we can get enough garbage for one more jump.

Abacus: You're going to travel in time again?

Philth: We failed in this timeline. We've got to go back even farther and cut down the tree that Thronos was made of.

Abacus: More time travel is not going to solve your problems. I've learned that the hard way. We've got to go save Q-Rex and undo my reckless magic. And if you need garbage, I've got a whole attic full of old wands and wand chargers and wand cases, ooh, and some wandy sticks.

Philth: What in the infinite trash heap is a wandy stick?

Abacus: It's like if you want a wand to stretch out and cast a spell back at you. You know, I don't know, they're pretty useless.

Mr. Eric: And so, Debie, Philth, and Abacus went up to the attic and collected all the garbage they could find. And then, with a pungent flick of Debie's wand, they puffed away in a green cloud to appear right in front of Thronos and Conqueror Rex.

Q-Rex: Thronos, should I destroy them?

Thronos: Well, absolutely. And you can drop the accent.

Mr. Eric: And Conquerer Rex roared.

Q-Rex: RARR.

Debie: Okay.

Mr. Eric: And bared his massive teeth.

Abacus: You know, I just remembered that T-rexes are scary, so maybe just poof us away, please?

Mr. Eric: But Debie and Philth were already leaping into action, turning old wand accessories into powerful magic.

[Laser noises]

But it bounced right off the enraged dinosaur.

Q-Rex: I'll be taking those [NOM].

Mr. Eric: And Conqueror Rex crunched down on the future magician's wands and a cloud of noxious gas flew out of the broken wands!



Philth & Debie: Ooh, ugh.

Thronos: Yeah, I'm happy I don't have a nose right now.

Abacus: You may not have a nose, but I've built you with a heart.

Thronos: Nuh-uh. I'm made of wood.

Abacus: I meant a metaphorical heart.

Thronos: Eh, would you just hold still so my dinosaur can eat you already.

Abacus: I'd rather not. Aha!

Mr. Eric: And Abacus used some garbage magic of his own. His old chargers disappeared and he got a super charge of speed in return.

Abacus: Zip zap! Come and get me!

Thronos: Why won't you let me destroy you?

Debie: Because you have no right to destroy us.

Philth: You're just a chair.

Abacus: Why don't you get sat in?

Mr. Eric: And Abacus ran up the T-rex's tail, a smelly cloud trailing behind him and jumped to sit, but stopped himself.

Abacus: Nooo.

Thronos: Why aren't you sitting in me.

Mr. Eric: And Abacus was holding himself just an inch off of Thronos's cushion.

Abacus: I'm trying to prove a point.

Debie: What point? We've won. Just sit on him.

Philth: Then you'll be in control.

Abacus: But controlling another person is wrong.

Debie: It's not a person.

Philth: It's a chair.

Thronos: If you two are gonna keep arguing.

Abacus: Oh, dear.

Q-Rex: Rarr!

Mr. Eric: And the T-rex bucked up and threw Abacus down and pinned him with his foot.

Abacus: Well, you haven't destroyed me yet. Maybe you do have a heart after all.

Thronos: No, it just didn't seem fair to crush you after...

Abacus: After I treated you fairly?

Thronos: Yeah, well. I thought all creatures just wanted to sit on me.

Abacus: So you decided to sit on us instead.

Mr. Eric: Debie and Philth grabbed a pair of Abacus's old wands and were trying to sneak around Thronos.

Thronos: But I had this plan to destroy humanity and use all the dinosaurs as my soldiers and it was gonna be super cool.

Q-Rex: Yeah, super cool.

Mr. Eric: Said Conqueror Rex. He was still under Thronos's control.

Abacus: And I pictured a future where all my dinosaurs had super chairs, but—

Mr. Eric: And Debie and Philth flashed out with the last scraps of their magic. But their old wands malfunctioned.

Philth: And I pictured a world where there weren't any more chairs.

Debie: Or dinosaurs. But maybe saving our world doesn't mean ending theirs.

Abacus: Now you're talking. Thronos, please get off of Q-Rex.

Thronos: Oh, I'm sorry.

Mr. Eric: The giant chair floated up off of the dinosaur.

Q-Rex: Oh, that feels so much better. From now on, I won't ever sit on anything that knows it's being sat on.

Thronos: And I'll start trying to pick a new future.

Abacus: And I'll start trying to use garbage magic.

Debie: We don't call it that.

Philth: Yeah, it's just regular magic to us.

Abacus: Maybe malodorous magic.

Debie: Oh, Abacus.

Abacus: Maybe Smell Spells.

Thronos: Are we don't here?

Philth: Yeah, I think so. Hey, you want to come with us to the future?

Debie: See what it looks like now?

Thronos: Sure do. Have a seat.

Philth: Huh?

Debie: What?

Thronos: I meant on my arms. I can carry you two like nothing.

Mr. Eric: And with one last gassy poof, Debie, Philth, and Thronos were back in the future.

Q-Rex: So, Abacus.

Mr. Eric: Asked Q-Rex.

Q-Rex: Do you think you could make me a chair that doesn't have a mind of its own?

Abacus: Oh, I've already got a few smell spells in mind. I'll need pile s of garbage to fuel my magic.

Q-Rex: You know, Abacus? I think I'll just buy a big mattress.

Abacus: Why waste your money? I could make you a giant super bed out of 30 soiled mattresses wrapped up in old sea weed. Q-Rex? Where'd you go?

Mr. Eric:

And Abacus saw, against the setting sun, the distant outline of a tyrannosaurs running for the hills.

The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

I hope you liked your story. I'd like to thank Karen Marshall O'Keeffe, my editor and producer. Craig Martinson for our awesome theme song, and Jason O'Keeffe for our artwork, as well as all you kids at home who know you aren't better than any other kids, even if you're good at different stuff.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme song plays.]

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