

Podcast: [What If World](#)

Episode: o61: What if Abacus and JFKat drank a potion at the same time and switched minds?

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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 is a little bit different. For some reason, I've got about a dozen questions about horses recently. They're mostly from kids who like horses and I want you all to know that I am listening. So, today, we're going to answer three questions from kids who like horses. Let's start with Lexi.

Lexi: Hi, Mr. Eric. I'm Lexi and I like to horseback ride and play with my horse, Bella. And my question is what if Abacus P. Grumbler and JF Kat both drank a potion at the same time and switched minds. Thank you, bye!

Mr. Eric: Wait, what? Lexi, you have a real horse that you get to ride? Oh man, you're lucky. Well, would you mind letting Bella come to What If World for one week? Thanks.

Now we've got another quick question from Jordan.

Jordan: My name's Jordan. I like horses. What if tacos were alive?

Mr. Eric: Mmm... tacos. Except, I guess I shouldn't want to eat living tacos. Well, anyway, we'll fit them in, too. And finally, and please don't be disappointed if this isn't your horse question, we're gonna hear from Francis.

Francis: It's Francis.

Francis' Parent: One of your favorite things?

Francis: Horses.

Francis' Parent: And your question?

Francis: What if doors could open by themselves and you could whisper to the future?

Francis' Parent: Awesome, great job.

Mr. Eric: Wow. Doors opening and whispering to the future. This is such a cool collection of questions. And if you are one of our horse-loving listeners out there, please know that if it weren't for all of your questions, I probably wouldn't be doing this story today. So let's find out what if Abacus P. Grumbler and JF Kat both drank a potion at the same time and switched places? Plus talking tacos and whispering doors.

[Rising harp scale]

Once upon a time, Abacus P. Grumbler was running late, which wasn't that unusual for the wizard.

Abacus: Oh, where's my conjuring cap? And my alchemical spectacles?

Mr. Eric: Cried Abacus.

Bellabaco: [Neighs.]

Mr. Eric: Said his new horse, Bellabaco.

Abacus: They're both on my head? I don't see how... oh, yes, there's my cap and my spectacles. But I'll never find my illusory goose.

Bellabaco: [Neighs.]

Abacus: Oh, it's illusory so it isn't real?

Bellabaco: [Neighs affirmatively.]

Abacus: Right. I guess we'll leave the goose.

Mr. Eric: And without a moment to spare, Abacus climbed up on Bellabaco the horse and rode right out of the Observatorium.

[Scene change sound]

JF Kat: Mr. Mouser!

Mr. Eric: Cried JF Kat, scrambling all around the What House, making a giant ruckus.

JF Kat: Where are my kitten mittens? And my lynx cufflinks?

Mr. Mouser: They're already on your paws, sir.

Mr. Eric: Said Mr. Mouser.

JF Kat: Well, I'm still missing an awful lot of ocelot!

Mr. Mouser: That's because they're an endangered species on What Is World.

JF Kat: Well, get on that! I'm running late.

Mr. Eric: And JF Kat rushed out the door, Mr. Mouser on his back.

Abacus: Can't you go any faster, Bellabaco?

Mr. Eric: Asked Abacus as the young horse galloped her hardest.

Bellabaco: [Exasperated neigh.]

Mr. Eric: But they just arrived at Magic Malts, a little diner that was supposed to have the best milkshakes in all of What If World.

Abacus: Oh, yes. Well done.

Mr. Eric: Said Abacus, climbing down off the horse.

Bellabaco: [Neighs.]

Mr. Eric: Bella shook her head and walked over to a trough of water for a drink. Abacus found a little red round table and took a seat in the hard red chair, checking his pocket watch.

Abacus: That JF Kat is 15 minutes late, how dare he?

JF Kat: I was only 14 minutes and 45 seconds late.

Mr. Eric: Abacus could hear JF Kat but he couldn't see him.

Abacus: President Kat, you've got an invisibility spell on you.

JF Kat: Oh, you're the worst wizard ever. My chair's just tucked in.

Mr. Eric: And Abacus untucked the red metal chair beside him to see the little fluffy black and white cat curled up on the chair, Mr. Mouser beside him.

JF Kat: See, I was here less late than you.

Abacus: I might have been on time if the roads were repaired. Shouldn't the president do something about that?

JF Kat: Don't sass me, wizard.

Mr. Mouser: Jojo, Abacus.

Mr. Eric: Mr. Mouser cut in.

Mr. Mouser: I think you two are forgetting why you're here.

Abacus: That's right. You were going to buy me a malted milkshake to make up for that horrible law where I had to dance with a dangling string for every kitty around.

JF Kat: That was a very popular law!

Abacus: For cats.

JF Kat: I don't know why I agreed to this.

Mr. Mouser: Many of your citizens did not wish to dance with string.

JF Kat: Now I'm getting mouth from the mouse. Just go get us two magic milkshakes.

Mr. Mouser: Yes, Mr. President. I'll just need a twenty query bill.

JF Kat: 20 query? What a rip off.

Mr. Eric: And JF Kat went to pull some money out of his cute little fanny pack, only the bills were all scratched up.

JF Kat: Whu-oh. I guess I was playing with these earlier.

Abacus: Now you can't even afford the milkshake?

JF Kat: I probably shouldn't have printed our new money on sheets of catnip.

Abacus: Well, I guess I'll conjure up a coin of my own.

JF Kat: Oh, forget it. You couldn't cast a spell to save your life.

Mr. Eric: Abacus pulled out his wand and...

Abacus: Alla coin-zam!

Mr. Eric: A shower of coins blasted out in every direction. Windows shattered! Milkshakes were overturned. Bella took about a hundred coins to the flanks!

Abacus: I apologize, but these coins will more than pay for the damages.

Mr. Mouser: Actually these are arcade tokens. They have no value outside of Arcadia.

JF Kat: Now you've done it.

Abacus: Only because you did it first.

Mr. Mouser: I'll just buy the milkshake with my own money.

Mr. Eric: And Mr. Mouser skittered over to the counter, but he only had enough query to afford one milkshake. He wasn't big enough to carry the milkshake himself, but Bellabaco went over to help him.

Bellabaco: [Neighs, somewhat exasperated.]

Mr. Mouser: I know, they just won't get along.

Mr. Eric: Bella had kept her neck craned uncomfortably all the way over just so she wouldn't spill the milkshake, but the wizard and the president didn't even notice.

Abacus: I think you're the worst president we've ever had. They should call you Nono Flubby Cat because of all your mistakes!

JF Kat: They should call you Abacan't do magic!

Abacus: Mine was better.

Mr. Mouser: The woman at the counter said it's very dangerous to share a magic milkshake when you're not getting along.

Abacus: Well, it's my milkshake, so I'll have as much as I want.

Mr. Eric: And Abacus stuck his straw through the top.

JF Kat: But this is such a great photo-op! A cat sharing a milkshake with a wizard.

Mr. Eric: And JF Kat stuck his straw in, as well.

Mr. Mouser: Photo-op? But who's taking the—

JF Kat: You're taking the picture. Chop chop.

Mr. Eric: And Mr. Mouser took out a little camera as Abacus and JF Kat both sipped their straws at the same time from the same magic milkshake.

[Magical zapping noises.]

[Click]

Mr. Eric: Went the camera.

Abacus: You call that a magic milkshake.

JF Kat: Finally, we agree on something. That didn't taste magical at all.

Bellabaco: [Neighs in fright.] [Thud]

Mr. Eric: Bellabaco had fainted for some reason.

Abacus: What a lazy little—

Mr. Eric: Said Abacus, jumping out of his seat to land lightly on his forepaws.

Abacus: I've half a mind to climb on top of you and snuggle up for a nine hour nap. Oh, wait a second.

JF Kat: What's happening?

Mr. Eric: Said JF Kat.

JF Kat: I'm abraconfused.

Mr. Eric: There was a flash of weird yellow light from his wand and—

[Awwwoooooeem aweeemmmeeem.]

Diner people: Hey, what's going on? Milkshakes go in the pants.

Mr. Eric: Everyone in the diner started acting crazy. Folks at home, do you think you know what's happened, yet?

Abacus: Mr. Mouser.

Mr. Eric: Asked Abacus.

Abacus: Why am I a cat?

Mr. Mouser: You're not a cat.

Mr. Eric: Said Mr. Mouser with a strange yellow tint in his eyes.

Mr. Mouser: You're a piece of cheese, mmmmm.

Mr. Eric: He'd been affected by the confusing spell, too and he started trying to nibble on Abacus's tail.

JF Kat: Remain calm. We've just had a little body mixup here. I'll use my magic to fix it in a jiffy.

Mr. Eric: And JF Kat, who was somehow trapped inside Abacus's body, raised his wand to cast another spell!

Abacus: Oh, wait! If you think I'm bad at magic after 50 years of practice, there's no telling what you might do with that wand.

JF Kat: Oh, that's fine. Let's just drink from this milkshake again and turn back to normal.

Mr. Eric: But a confused hippo with yellow eyes had their milkshake in his hand.

Hippo: No, I know. Milkshakes don't go in the pants.

JF Kat: No, wait!

Abacus: Don't drink it!

Hippo: Milkshakes really go... in the pants. [SPLORT]

Mr. Eric: And he poured their milkshake down his pants.

Abacus: As a human I would not have drank that pants milkshake, but as a cat it doesn't seem to bother me so much.

JF Kat: We're not drinking the hippo pant milkshake.

Abacus: Oh, fine. I'm taking a nap.

Mr. Eric: But Bella was finally coming to and the confusion spell seemed to be wearing off.

Bellabaco: [Snorts]

Mr. Eric: Snorted Bella.

Abacus: [HISS!]

Mr. Eric: Hissed Abacus.

Abacus: Everyone hold still, that's not a big fluffy pillow. It's a giant dog with hooves.

JF Kat: That's exactly what I used to think, but now I'm pretty sure it's a horse.

Bellabaco: [Neighs informatively.]

Mr. Mouser: She says you've suffered a cursequence for using magic while you were being mean.

Mr. Eric: Mr. Mouser straightened his bowtie, having gained his composure again.

Abacus: Meow I've got it.

Mr. Eric: Said Abacus.

Abacus: To break the curse, we must swear in a law wherein all citizens of What IF World get two cans of tuna every.

JF Kat: Wait, I know all about cursequences, suddenly. We've got to understand why we were being mean if we want to undo the cursequence. Looks like we've got to walk a mile in each other's shoes.

Abacus: But I'm not wearing any shoes. And if you try to put little booties on me, you will be sorry!

JF Kat: But you'd look so cute in little booties! Let me just conjure up a few really—

Bellabaco: [Neighs insistently.]

Mr. Eric: Bella was getting impatient, so she picked up JF Kat by the robes and slung him over her saddle.

JF Kat: What do you think you're doing? I'm the president of What If—

Bellabaco: [Neighs.]

JF Kat: Whaaaaaooooooo.

Mr. Eric: And Bella took off toward the Observatorium. Then Mr. Mouser had out his phone.

Mr. Mouser: Yes, I need a kitty clean-up crew.

Mr. Eric: He looked around Magic Malts, still littered with arcade tokens and spilled milkshakes.

Mr. Mouser: Better make it a double.

Mr. Eric: And a bunch of black cars pulled up to the diner. Workers wearing plastic suits carried out mops and vacuums and brooms and buckets.

Abacus: Oh, I'm so sorry, everyone.

Mr. Eric: Said Abacus, sliding through milkshake and jumping up on a table.

Abacus: I just don't know what got into mee-ow. Look at that unbroken glass.
[Glass shatters.]

Mr. Eric: And the kitty Abacus had knocked the glass onto the floor for no reason.

Abacus: Let's get out of here, Mr. Mouser.

Mr. Mouser: That would be best.

[Scene change sound.]

Mr. Eric: JF Kat in Abacus's body was finally getting the hang of riding Bella.

JF Kat: So I've just got to figure out how to be a good wizard and then Abacus and I can switch back.

Bellabaco: [Neighs.]

JF Kat: It's not that simple? Just watch.

Mr. Eric: And as JF Kat rode up to the Observatorium, he could hear screaming from inside.

Children: [Screaming.]

Mr. Eric: He rode inside and followed the ruckus to the cafeteria. It was Taco Tuesday, except the tacos didn't seem to want to get eaten.

Taco: You want a piece of me?

Mr. Eric: Said a particularly surly taco, walking over on lettuce legs toward a little girl.

Girl: No, I just wanted to talk to you, that's why I made you come alive.

Taco: Well, now we're all alive and we want answers. How many Taco Tuesdays have there been?

Girl: I don't know. A million?

Taco: Oh, the q-manity.

Mr. Eric: JF Kat tried to calm the taco down.

JF Kat: Don't worry. None of those tacos were even alive.

Taco: What?

Mr. Eric: Cried the taco.

Taco: They never even got to experience this beautiful thing called life?

Girl: I don't think so.

Mr. Eric: Said the little girl.

Girl: But you should check the dumpster.

Taco: Jalape-nooo!

[Scene change sound.]

Mr. Eric: Abacus and Mr. Mouser were just getting back to the plain wooden door standing in the middle of that great field that led into the What House. Except, there seemed to be a lot of other doors in that field today. Sliding doors and swinging doors. And falling doors and lifting doors. And big double doors and little flapping batwing doors. And even walking frames with no doors left inside them.

And as they walked into the field, they heard whispers seeming to come from every little door as it opened and closed.

Abacus: Ooh.

Mr. Eric: Said Abacus the cat.

Abacus: I would like to go in all of those closed doors. But none of those open doors.

Mr. Mouser: Typical cat. But I wouldn't go through any of those doors. They only lead to the past.

Abacus: Oh, purr-fect. Then I can take a nice long nap and not miss any time at all.

Mr. Eric: And as Abacus tried to sneak through one of the doors, he heard it whispering.

Door: Everything's a mess.

Mr. Eric: And then he heard another door whisper.

Door 2: Mr. President, help us.

Mr. Eric: And then a third door.

Door 3: Make everything better, but make sure not to change anything.

Abacus: What are all of them whispering about?

Mr. Mouser: Doors aren't very good at talking. They can only whisper into the future.

Abacus: But we're in the present.

Mr. Mouser: The present is their future.

Abacus: All right, well, listen everyone. I want to take a nap. I need all of you doors to close and all of you whispers to stop.

Mr. Eric: The doors started opening and closing even faster, whispers pouring out with every crack.

Doors: The two-doors are the best. Only the glass doors really see. No door. No door.

Abacus: I don't get it. What do they all want?

Mr. Mouser: They want your help.

Abacus: But how can I help them when they won't listen to me?

Mr. Mouser: Welcome to politics.

[Scene change sound.]

Angry Tacos: [In the same tune as the flying monkey chant from The Wizard of oz] Taco-oo. Tacoo---oooh. [Continues in background.]

Mr. Eric: JF Kat, Bella, and a handful of students were penned in by a horde of angry tacos.

JF Kat: This has not gone as well as I'd hoped.

Bellabaco: [Annoyed neigh.]

JF Kat: I know my magic just kept making more of them.

Bellabaco: [Neighs a question.]

JF Kat: No, I think I've got a better idea.

Mr. Eric: And JF Kat hopped back on Bella's back.

JF Kat: Listen all you tacos. I happen to know this horse loves a nice crunchy tortilla.

Mr. Eric: The queen taco, sitting in her salotrone pointed one cheesy finger at the horse.

Taco Queen: You cayenne-n't hurt us anymore.

Mr. Eric: She said. And all the tacos swarmed after Bella, who took off with a snort.

Bellabaco: [Snorts.]

Mr. Eric: Toward the What House.

JF Kat: Okay, maybe you're idea was better.

[Scene change sound.]

Abacus: I think I've got it. So the swing doors want better screws and the glass doors want cleaner screws, and the no doors want me to abolish screws altogether.

No Door: No door.

Abacus: No door, indeed.

Mr. Eric: Abacus had been at it for hours.

Abacus: Oh, this is impossible.

Mr. Eric: And suddenly, all the doors opened at once.

Abacus: What? What's happening now? Did I do something right, maybe?

Mr. Mouser: No, I think they just heard that thing you said about the nap.

All Doors Together: You can come take a nap here, if you don't raise our taxes. No door.

Abacus: But I said that six hours ago.

Mr. Mouser: Impressive. They heard that much faster than usual.

[Sound of a horse galloping.]

Mr. Eric: Bella's thundering hooves sounded in the distance, along with the crunch of thousands of tiny little lettuce legs as the taco army arrived.

JF Kat: Abacus, I don't like being a wizard!

Abacus: Oh, JF Kat! I despise being president.

JF Kat: All right, if we could just fix each other's problems, that should undo the cursequence.

Mr. Mouser: I think you're supposed to learn to listen and understand in order to fix this.

Mr. Eric: Said Mr. Mouser.

Abacus: All right, I was thinking we could send your tacos through these doors into the past—

JF Kat: I'm listening, I love it.

Abacus: And then the tacos will talk-over the problems.

JF Kat: Because they're tacos, exactly.

Bellabaco: [Neighs.]

Mr. Eric: Bella rolled her eyes.

Mr. Mouser: I actually do have a suggestion.

Mr. Eric: Piped up Mr. Mouser.

JF Kat: Plus, since they'll be back in time.

Abacus: They can save their taco brethren from being eaten.

Bellabaco: [Neighs.]

JF Kat: What is she yammering on about.

Abacus: Oh, I don't know. Your mouse keeps squeaking about something, too. It's all I can do not to eat him.

JF Kat & Abacus: [Laugh together.]

Mr. Eric: JF Kat squatted down and Abacus lifted his little paw, and the two gave each other a high five.

JF Kat: Why didn't that work?

Abacus: I thought for sure the spell would be broken. We finally understand each other.

Mr. Eric: They looked around for any sign of magic, but all they saw was Mr. Mouser quietly trying to calm down the doors. And Bellabaco stamping her feet threateningly and running back and forth, trying to keep the horde of tacos at bay.

JF Kat: Wait a second.

Abacus: Oh dear.

Mr. Eric: The swarming mass of tacos finally overtook the brave horse and angry two-door was just about to close on Mr. Mouser.

Abacus: Oh, Mr. Mouser.

JF Kat: Oh, poor Bella.

JF Kat & Abacus: I'm sorry!

[Magical zapping noise.]

Mr. Eric: And just like that, they were back at Magic Malts. There was no milkshake mess. There were no scattered arcade tokens. They'd only just sat down, back in their old bodies.

JF Kat: Oh, Mr. Mouser. I so missed wanting to eat you all the time.

Mr. Mouser: That is both endearing and terrifying.

JF Kat: And the fluffy kitty pounced on his old friend and gave him little kitty kisses.

Abacus: Oh, Bella. I've been unfair to you. And so has JF Kat, but I think that timeline has been erased.

Bellabaco: [Neighs.]

Abacus: You're right. It is a terrible apology, and I promise to always listen to you from now on.

Bellabaco: [Questioning neigh.]

Abacus: I swear it! Or my name isn't Katticus Purr Grumbler. Uh?

[Falling harp scale]

Mr. Eric: Well, Francis, Jordan, and Lexi, I hope you all enjoyed your story. I'd also like to thank Karen Marshall O'Keeffe, my editor and producer, Craig Martinson for our theme song, Jason O'Keefe for our artwork, and all you kids at home who know that you should never have to be cruel to one friend in order to get along with another.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme plays.]

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