

Podcast: [What If World](#)

Episode: 064: What if pictures that you've taken in the past turned into movies when you looked at them?

File Length: 15:54

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 a question from Dorothy.

Dorothy: Hi, my name is Dorothy. I'm five years old and I like mysterious things and my question is what if pictures that you've taken in the past turned into movies when you looked at them. Bye!

Mr. Eric: Dorothy, that's wonderful. And do you know who else really likes mysterious things? That's right! What If World's quote-unquote "best" detective, Alabaster Zero. Let's see if you can solve the mystery within the mystery of our Valentine's Day special. What if pictures that you've taken in the past turned to movies when you looked at them?

[Rising harp scale]

It was Movietines Day in What If World, a day when you gave your loved ones a picture and that picture turned into a cool movie of you two doing stuff today. [Photo click]

Alabaster Zero heard a picture snap behind him and turned around to see his partner in crime-solving, Fair Elise, with her hands suspiciously behind her back.

Alabaster: What have you got there, Fair Elise? It wouldn't be a Movietines Day card for me, would it?

Fair Elise: No, Alabaster. I know how you don't like Movietines Day.

Alabaster: Yeah, I don't like that ooshy gooshy stuff. Ew, I love you, here's a picturemovie. Well, I don't like being in pictures and I certainly don't want to be in a movie. There's too much crime to solve.

Fair Elise: Of course there is, Alabaster. Well, happy Movietines Day to you anyhow.

Alabaster: Well, let me just throw away all my Movietines Day cards and we can get to work.

Mr. Eric: Hanging from the front of Alabaster's desk was a brown paper lunch bag with his name written on it in crayon. Alabaster untapped the brown paper bag from his desk and turned it upside down, but not a single picture fell out.

Alabaster: Not a single picture fell out.

Fair Elise: Good, no pictures. Just what you wanted. Now we can get to solving mysteries, as is our job.

Alabaster: [Choked up] Yeah, just what I wanted. Solve a mystery... okay.

Mr. Eric: And Alabaster took one last peek in the brown paper bag.

Alabaster: Wait a second.

Fair Elise: What is it?

Alabaster: I think we've already got our first mystery.

Mr. Eric: He showed the bag to Fair Elise and she peeked inside.

Alabaster: What happened to all my Movietines pictures?

Fair Elise: But Alabaster, you got what you wanted.

Alabaster: Exactly. I never get what I want. I never get to solve cool mysteries, I've never got to see a PRNDB—

Fair Elise: A what?

Alabaster: A pirate robot ninja dragon battle, obviously.

Fair Elise: Okay.

Alabaster: And I never don't get ooshy gooshy love cards from my friends on Movietines Day.

Mr. Eric: And Alabaster Zero started stomping toward Fred the Zombie Dog's desk.

Fred: Oh, hi, Alabaster.

Mr. Eric: Said Fred the Zombie Dog. He talked like that because his tongue always stuck out of his mouth.

Alabaster: Don't you sweet-talk me, you cute little zombie pug!

Mr. Eric: And Alabaster swept all the pens and files off of Fred's desk.

Fred: Hey, what's the big idea?

Mr. Eric: Said Fred. And Alabaster grabbed the pug by the collar and talked nose to nose with the zombie dog.

Alabaster: I think the question is, what was your big idea?

Fair Elise: Alabaster, what are you doing?

Mr. Eric: Asked Fair Elise.

Alabaster: Solving the mystery of the missing Movietines Day pictures, of course.

Fred: I don't know what you're talking about, Detective.

Mr. Eric: Said Fred the Dog, his eyes darting back and forth nervously.

Alabaster: I'll tell you—oh, guh, I just can't talk this close to you.

Fred: I know, zombie dogs have real bad breath.

Alabaster: Everyone thinks you're the law abiding hero of the Fur Force, but with all that rescuing people comes with a lot of paperwork.

Fair Elise: Alabaster, this is crazy.

Alabaster: Or so crazy it just might work.

Fred: Fine, I admit it. I got a lot of paperwork, but I never ate any of it.

Alabaster: I didn't say anything about you eating paper.

Fred: You didn't? I could have sworn.

Alabaster: Fair Elise, what do zombie dogs eat to stay alive?

Fair Elise: Well, they eat the brains of sticks, of course. Everyone knows that.
[Gasp]

Mr. Eric: Fair Elise gasped.

Alabaster: And what's a more concentrated form of stick brain than paper.

Fred: I told you, copper! I never ate no files.

Alabaster: Of course you didn't. You wouldn't want to jeopardize your rescue job. But there's one holiday when everyone gives everyone nice paper, nice, glossy, delicious paper, with pictures on one side!

Fred: Okay, I admit it! I ate all my Movietines Day cards. I didn't even look at them first, I'm sorry, Alabaster. I know how much you love me.

Alabaster: I did it, Fair Elise! I solved a mystery.

Fair Elise: Well done, Alabaster.

Alabaster: Well, just cough up my cards and we'll call the whole thing even, huh?

Fred: I didn't eat your cards. I just ate mine. You can tell because how I slobber all over the place when I eat something. See?

Mr. Eric: And Freddy gestured with his long tongue towards his own brown paper bag, ripped to smithereens with slobber and little bits of pictures everywhere.

Fred: Sorry Alabaster, but you got the wrong guy.

Alabaster: Sorry? Don't you know what this means?

Fair Elise: What does it mean?

Alabaster: It means there's even more to the mystery and I'm on a roll.

Fair Elise: Have you considered that you didn't a card because you didn't give anyone else a—

Alabaster: Monsters. It must have been monsters.

Fair Elise: Alabaster! You can't blame every crime on monsters.

Alabaster: Of course I can! You've got to be monstrous to commit a crime.

Fair Elise: Just because a person is different, doesn't make them monstrous.

Alabaster: Yeah, yeah, I know that.

Mr. Eric: But Alabaster was already grabbing his rough leather jacket and running out of the police station. Fair Elise fluttered quickly to catch up.

Fair Elise: Alabaster, you can't expect to just run out the door and find monsters—
[ROAR] [CRUNCHING]

Pirate: Y'argh!

Mr. Eric: And right before their eyes, a horde of fire breathing dragons flew towards a mob of robots crackling with electricity who were teleporting in little crackling bursts toward a ship full of pirates. Whose flying ship was sailing towards a whole clan of ninjas running through the trees!

Robots: Today is the day!

Mr. Eric: Said the robots.

Dragons: Now you're going to get it.

Mr. Eric: Said the dragons.

Pirates: Wait until you're in firing distance!

Mr. Eric: Said the pirates.

Ninja: Make sure your shuriken fly true!

Mr. Eric: Said a ninja. And all her fellow ninjas pulled out little paper throwing stars.

Alabaster: Can you believe it, Fair Elise? A PNRDB! Just like I always wanted.

Fair Elise: I really can't believe it.

Mr. Eric: And the ninjas started throwing their paper stars. And the pirates were launching giant paper cannon balls. And the robots started firing out of their chests. Or... firing pieces of paper out of their printer chests.

Alabaster: Well, I guess it's a non-lethal paper battle, but, I'll take it.

Mr. Eric: And the dragons all inhaled a deep breath and blasted out tornados of paper towards the pirates and ninjas and robots. As all the blasted out paper started hitting this group and that, everyone started cheering.

All: This is incredible! I agree, so cool. Y'arr, I just love it. You have all outdone yourselves this year.

Mr. Eric: But the pirates, robots, ninjas, and dragons didn't look like they were fighting anymore. They looked like they were reading each other's pieces of paper.

Alabaster: Oh, you've got to be kidding me.

All: These are the nicest Movietines cards ever. Y'arr, I feel like I'm actually in the movie. Be careful, if a magic creature gives you Movietines Day card, it can pull you in. The robot's right.

Mr. Eric: Said a dragon.

Dragon: Just make sure you don't look too closely.

Fair Elise: Isn't it nice you got to see a PRNDB at last?

Alabaster: Yeah, it was pretty cool.

Fair Elise: It's like you're getting everything you want today.

Alabaster: Yeah.

Mr. Eric: And Alabaster stared at all these friends who fought sometimes but still loved each other enough to say so with a card.

Fair Elise: Alabaster, are you crying?

Alabaster: What? No. I'm just mad because we found all these monsters, but we didn't find my Movietines Day cards.

Fair Elise: Maybe you're trying to solve the wrong mystery, Alabaster.

Alabaster: Solve the wrong mystery... or find the wrong monster.

Fair Elise: Oh, bother.

Alabaster: Obviously, these monsters love Movietines Day.

Fair Elise: Right.

Alabaster: So what monster would dislove it enough to steal someone else's Movietines Day cards?

Fair Elise: Dislove isn't a word.

Alabaster: That's right! A vampire.

Fair Elise: Sometimes I don't know how we solve crimes.

Alabaster: With our brains, Fair Elise. And our guts. You see, vampires have no reflections, right?

Fair Elise: Right.

Alabaster: Which means, they wouldn't appear in pictures, right?

Fair Elise: I suppose so.

Alabaster: And if you can't see them in pictures, then you couldn't see them in Movietines Day cards, either.

Fair Elise: Well, that is logical.

Alabaster: Fair Elise? How fast can you get us to Cackula's mansion.

Fair Elise: It will be a long and harrowing adventure, Alabaster.

[Magical noises]

Alabaster: Wow, that was a long adventure.

Fair Elise: Harrowing, too.

Alabaster: Oh, so harrowing.

Fair Elise: Well, we're here.

Mr. Eric: It was night time and they knocked on the door to Cackula's mansion.
[Knocking noise] The knock echoed through the night air and the door slowly creaked open [Creaky door noise.]

Cackula: Hello, and welcome.

Alabaster: Aren't you going to wish us happy Movietines Day?

Cackula: Movietines Day was a long and harrowing adventure ago.

Alabaster: That's what you're going to be saying about your stay in prison!

Mr. Eric: And Alabaster burst through the open door, Fair Elise behind him, shining a blinding light into the spooky mansion.

Alabaster: Show yourself, vampire!

Cackula: Ha ha ha. What are you talking abt? I'm right here.

Mr. Eric: They could hear Cackula. It sounded like he was right next to them, but Alabaster couldn't see the vampire.

Fair Elise: I don't like this, Zero.

Alabaster: Me neither, Elise.

Cackula: I don't like it either. Why can't you see me?

Alabaster: Well, wherever you are, you're under arrest for stealing my Movietines Day cards.

Cackula: What? I didn't steal your Movietines Day cards. I didn't even leave the mansion on Movietines Day. It makes me sad because I can't get Movietines Day cards.

Fair Elise: Can you prove it, Count?

Cackula: Of course.

Mr. Eric: Said Cackula, pointing up to a security camera in the corner of the room.

Cackula: There is security footage of me wallowing on the couch in self-pity, eating one blood orange after the next.

Mr. Eric: And the invisible vampire went over to a laptop and pulled up some footage from his living room. There was indeed a pile of blood orange peels building up beside the couch.

Alabaster: But no vampire.

Cackula: Well, yes, you wouldn't see me on the footage because I cast no reflection.

Fair Elise: He is the last vampire, Alabaster. That's why we came here.

Alabaster: I guess your story checks out. It must mean that—

Fair Elise: That your friends stopped giving you pictures because you stopped returning their gesture of love.

Alabaster: What? No. It means there's even more to the mystery. Fair Elise? Got one more long and harrowing journey in you?

Cackula: Well, you could always take the slightly longer and less harrowing journey.

[Zap!]

Fair Elise: That journey was slightly longer.

Alabaster: But thank goodness it was slightly less harrowing.

Fair Elise: So, we're back in the police station. What is your big reveal, Alabaster?

Alabaster: Well, if it wasn't Fred the Dog, and if it wasn't the pirate robot ninja dragon battlers.

Fair Elise: And it wasn't the vampire that we couldn't see for some reason.

Alabaster: Then there's just one last piece to this puzzle.

Mr. Eric: And Alabaster started walking back to Fred the Zombie Dog's desk.

Fred: Oh, hi Zero. It feels like you've been gone a long time. Plus a slightly longer time.

Alabaster: And I bet you wish I was still gone, Fred the Zombie Dog, or should I say—

Mr. Eric: And Alabaster grabbed the dog's collar, pulling it up, taking off the whole zombie dog's face like a mask, revealing underneath—

Alabaster: Patty Pan of the Fur Force.

Patty Pan: Hahaha! Took you long enough, Alabaster!

Mr. Eric: Giggled the green schnauzer, taking off the rest of Fred the Zombie Dog's costume.

Fair Elise: That is not at all what I expected.

Mr. Eric: Said Fair Elise.

Alabaster: Fred the Dog would have left slobber everywhere when he ate my Movietines Day cards, but a cute little green schnauzer nose could have zipped right in and out.

Patty Pan: You figured it out!

Alabaster: Or have I?

Patty Pan: Huh?

Fair Elise: What?

Alabaster: Because I think the mystery goes deeper still.

Mr. Eric: The real Fred the Zombie Dog popped out of a drawer in his desk.

Fred: Oh, now you're just being crazy, Alabaster.

Alabaster: Crazy? Or so crazy it just might work? This Movietines Day, I got to do all my favorite things. Solve an incredible mystery, witness a pirate robot ninja dragon battle, and even not get any Movietines Day cards. You know what that means?

Fair Elise: Oh, what's the latest mystery, now?

Alabaster: It means I've got some really good friends!

Mr. Eric: Cried Alabaster, scooping up Fred and Patty Pan and Fair Elise all in a big hug.

Alabaster: You guys gave me the best present, and I love you!

Fair Elise: Hahaha stop it, Alabaster.

Fred: I guess you figured us out.

Patty Pan: Well, I don't know you that well, but I love playing tricks.

Alabaster: And Movietines Day or not, you've got to show your friends you love them—oh, Fred, you really stink bad.

Fred: I know, sorry.

Alabaster: It's like you took a bath in old mayonnaise.

Fred: Well, what dog wouldn't, given the chance?

Alabaster: [Gags] Well, I should be honest with you guys. I actually really do like my Movietines Day cards.

Fred: Is that so.

Alabaster: Yeah, I've kept every one.

Fair Elise: We know, Alabaster.

Alabaster: So you got me one, after all.

Fair Elise: You're looking at it.

Alabaster: Huh?

Fred: I guess he hasn't figured out the last mystery.

Patty Pan: Haha, we got you good!

Alabaster: What are you talking about—

Mr. Eric: And then he thought back to the beginning of this adventure. [Camera click] The picture snapping, Fair Elise hiding something behind her back. An impossible battle with all his favorite creatures. The dragon's warning.

Dragon: Just make sure you don't look too closely.

Mr. Eric: The invisible vampire, and Fair Elise again and again.

Fair Elise: It's like you're getting everything you wanted. Maybe you're trying to solve the wrong mystery, Alabaster. You're looking at it. You're looking at it. [Echoes]

Mr. Eric: Folks at home, have you figured it out?

Alabaster: I did get a Movietines Day card.

Fair Elise: Of course you did.

Fred: We give them to you every year.

Alabaster: I finally solved the mystery of the missing Movietines card. It's—

Mr. Eric: And everything went black and little white words started scrolling up against the black of the Movietine card.

Alabaster: Question by Dorothy. Voices by Mr. Eric. Produced by Karen Marshall O'Keefe. Theme song by Craig Martinson. Artwork by Jason O'Keefe. Guys, this was the best present ever.

Fred: No, keep reading.

Alabaster: Fred disguise provided by Abacus P. Grumbler.

Abacus: You're welcome.

Alabaster: Rancid jars of mayo donated by JF Kat.

JF Kat: Anything for Fred the dog.

Alabaster: And a special thanks to all you kids out there for telling people how you really feel about them, Movietines Day or no.

Until we meet again, keep wondering!

Oh, I love you, Mom and Dad! I love you Karen and Jason and Craig and Melissa and Teddy and Nadella and Lydian Rain and Grandma and Papa and Fred and Ginger and even Otis—

[What If World theme song plays.]

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