

Podcast: [What If World](#)

Episode: 106: What if puzzles could walk and talk? (Ifmas Puzzle part 2)

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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: Previously on *What If World*:

Pixicato: But there is a lot of puzzle still missing. Is it possible we've lost a few pieces?

Mr. Eric: An Ifmas puzzle can redraw itself to look like anything you please, and this puzzle was a near complete family portrait of Fair Elise, Sprite Alright, and Pixicato.

[Time skip noise.]

Pipey-O : You spend ten years building a dungeon around a little gold puzzle piece.

Wowser: But I'm a boss monster! Protecting the golden trophy makes my life complete.

[Time skip noise.]

Mr. Eric: Pixicato turned to see a worried look on Sprite Alright's face just as she, too, was turned to paper.

Pixicato: Oh no!

[Time skip noise.]

Sprite Alright: Yeah, okay. Now my head's stuck here, too.

Mr. Eric: But now that Pixicato and Sprite Alright were fitting together like a couple of puzzle pieces, they looked like a sort of paper bridge with legs.

And, pushing off each other with these little paper feet, they eased themselves into a slow, kitty-corner waddle all the way to the Observatorium.

[Gentle bell music.]

- 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're gonna tell part two of our paper puzzle piece person story. So, Asha, Caleb, and all our listeners—
- Dracomax: Prepare to thank Idris, our newest patron!
- Mr. Eric: Oh, hi, Dracomax. Thank you for just squeezing your snout into the studio today so you don't knock the whole thing down.
- Dracomax: Idris is a very polite boy. He would not want me to destroy your studio.
- Mr. Eric: Well, thank you, Idris. And there's a young man named Alec who wanted a shout-out from me, Mr. Eric. Alec plays the cello, and he loves classical music. That's really cool.
- Dracomax: Maybe Idris and Alec can start a jam band together.
- Mr. Eric: Well, they might not even live in the same state or country.
- Fred the Dog: Oh, but wait, we got one more quick shout-out to Maddox, and Elise and Teo. Teo is the oldest, he's got eight whole months but then you got Maddox at seven years and Elise at five years.
- Mr. Eric: Fred, I think you gotta check your math on that.
- Fred the Dog: I did. Eight are more than seven.
- Mr. Eric: Yeah, but eight months is fewer than seven years so actually Maddox is the oldest.
- Fred the Dog: Oh, I so confused.
- Mr. Eric: It's okay. Numbers are hard.
- Dracomax: Maddox and Elise can join the jam band, too. At eight months, Teo will make a better dancing stage baby than musician.
- Mr. Eric: Dancing stage baby?
- Fred the Dog: Okay, thank you Idris and Alec and Maddox, Elise and Teo. Mr. Eric, you better get to that story now.
- Mr. Eric: Okay, okay. Let's find out the rest of Caleb's question and answer our patron Asha's question, what if puzzles could walk and talk.

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Pushing off each other with these little paper feet, they eased themselves into a slow kitty-corner waddle all the way to the Observatorium. Of course, when they reached the great doors of the Observatorium, Pixicato's paper hands couldn't make a knocking sound on the door.

Folks at home, can you make a knocking sound? You can make a [knocking sound] with your mouth, you can knock on something nearby, or you could even think a knocking sound with your brain.

[Multiple knocking sounds.]

Abacus: Will you oafs quiet that racket. Yes, even you.

Mr. Eric: Me? I stopped. [Knocking continues.]

Abacus: Oh, you. You know who I'm referring to.

Mr. Eric: Well, it wasn't me.

Abacus: Mr. Eric, get back to the story.

Mr. Eric: Oh, right, ah, yes. Abacus P. Grumbler poked his head underneath the Observatorium door.

Abacus: Sprite Alright, Fair Elise, are you here to tell me why I'm a piece of paper?

Pixicato: Oh no, we hoped the magic wouldn't have spread this far.

Sprite Alright: Hey, can we come in? Maybe you've got some magic in here that could help us.

Abacus: Oh, very well.

Mr. Eric: And Abacus slid his head back under the door, then Sprite Alright and Pixicato folded their little bridge and pushed themselves under the door, too.

Abacus: I've already tried all my wand, even the broken ones. Whatever fiendish sorcerer worked this magic must have turned our own spells into paper.

Pixicato: It wasn't a sorcerer, it was just this puzzle piece.

Wowser: Let Wowser in, please!

Mr. Eric: Came a shout at the door.

Pipey-O : Yes, please! I'm locked to him like a puzzle piece. It's not pleasant.

Abacus: Oh, is this what Wowser was guarding? He'll stop at nothing to get it back.

Pixicato: What should we do?

Abacus: What all wizards must do when they find themselves without magic.

Sprite Alright: Run away?

Abacus: Yes, run away. Quickly, now!

[Record scratch.]

Mr. Eric: And Abacus looked at the strange puzzle piece of Pixicato wings and Sprite Alright arms.

Abacus: Would you mind if I joined up with your puzzle. It might help us to run faster.

Sprite Alright: All right.

Pixicato: Quickly, quickly!

Mr. Eric: And then he lifted his floppy slippers paper feet and now they made sort of a three-legged bridge. With Abacus pushing both his hands together like a third leg, they were able to run much faster and even go up the stairs.

Wowser: Just give me the trophy and everything will be well!

Abacus: I don't think that's how we'll break the spell.

Wowser: Then I'll just eat all of you and become the mightiest puzzle piece of all.

Sprite Alright: All right, that doesn't sound like a good solution, either.

Mr. Eric: Wowser had squeezed his way into this castle and it sounded like his giant paper form was catching up.

Pipey-O : That's no way to make new friends, Wowser.

Wowser: I'm not trying to make new friends. I'm being a boss monster! It's all I'm good at.

Mr. Eric: Abacus, Pixi, and Sprite got to a stone landing, Wowser not far behind, when suddenly that stone started to shift below them, sliding along the wall.

Abacus: Oh, I was afraid this might happen.

Pixicato: What is happening now?

Abacus: Oh, the Observatorium, it's sort of morphing itself around the story. It really gets into this stuff. Jump!

Mr. Eric: And the three of them folded their legs, or leg-arms and sprung up just as another stone platform flew over them. They landed lightly on top of it.

Wowser: Wowser, there's like, fireballs now.

Mr. Eric: And indeed their paper started to crinkle. There was a moat of fire below them and little fireballs kept springing up and then falling back down. Wowser chasing them from stone platform to stone platform! Even a paper ghost flew at them.

Ghost: Hey, I'm a ghost, don't look at me or I'll get shy.

Abacus: Quick, look at the ghost!

Mr. Eric: And all three of them pivoted to the tiny white bubble of paper ghost when...

Wowser: Hey, it's a ghost.

Mr. Eric: And Wowser grabbed at the white bubble of paper. The puzzle piece interlocked with his hand making it twice as big.

Wowser: I've got a ghost hand.

Ghost: I'm shy, stop looking at me.

Wowser: Ghost hand, help me catch these people.

Ghost: No, stop looking at me.

Pipey-O: He's a shy ghost, quit pushing him.

Wowser: But if we don't catch that kid, we'll be stuck like paper forever!

Sprite Alright: Hey, you don't know that. We're trying to figure this out. Just stop chasing us.

Ghost: Yeah, and stop looking at me. I'm a shy ghost.

Wowser: No! I'll do whatever it takes to get back to normal.

Mr. Eric: And Wowser climbed up to the same platform as them. Pixicato backed up as far as she could until she was pressed up against a big green pipe opening up behind her.

Wowser: I'm sorry, being a boss monster is all I know.

Mr. Eric: And Wowser lunged for them. But the shy ghost hand held him back.

Ghost: No, they're still looking at me! I don't like it.

Mr. Eric: And Pipey-O called out to the three of them.

Pipey-O : Just get over the pipe, trust me.

Mr. Eric: And the three of them used their weird bridge arm legs to climb up over the pipe, Wowser finally pulling away from the shy ghost to jump after them, when a big paper venus fly trap shot up out of that pipe and closed on Wowser.

Plant: Oh, excuse me, I'm just a pipe plant. I'm supposed to bite people, I'm not sure why.

Wowser: Wow, that's really weird.

Pipey-O : Let me go!

Plant: Oh, no, of course, totally, totally. Whoa, but our puzzle pieces are fitting together kinda weird we're supposed to be friends or something, I don't know. I don't know. I'm just lonely in this pipe all the time.

Wowser: I'm a boss monster so you have to listen to me and let me go.

Plant: Oh. Sure, yeah, go ahead, go ahead. Sorry about that.

Mr. Eric: And the pipe plant started unlocking its puzzle pieces from Wowser. But just then, Pixicato started to approach in her strange, shuffling, bridge-puzzle gait with the golden trophy, her Ifmas puzzle piece, held out to Wowser.

Pixicato: We just wanted to fix this, too, but if the puzzle piece means that much to you, you can have it.

Sprite Alright: All right, I'm not sure we sh—

Pixicato: It's okay, Mom. I think I get it, now.

Abacus: That doesn't seem like a good idea.

Mr. Eric: And as Wowser reached out for the piece, his folded paper hand interlocked with it and so did Pixicato's.

Pixicato: Do you know what an Ifmas puzzle is for?

Mr. Eric: Asked Pixicato.

Wowser: Well, that piece is for guarding and the rest—

Pixicato: Can turn into any imagine you imagine. All the Ifs you ever thought about and you're supposed to settle on an if that makes you feel really happy.

Mr. Eric: And Wowser scrunched up his paper brows and thought, and all these people stuck together in one big puzzle reshaped and recolored, painting an image of Wowser guarding his golden trophy all alone. Then there was Pixicato painted right beside him, holding his giant dog-turtle hand.

Pixicato: Is that the if that makes you happiest?

Wowser: I don't know any other ifs.

Mr. Eric: And there was Pipey-O, painted on the platform again. A plate of eggs appeared in his hands and little wavy steam lines were drawn up from them.

Pipey-O: I think a nice if would be spending the day with some friends.

Mr. Eric: And instead of a narrow bridge painted over an empty chasm, a stone floor appeared and Sprite Alright was drawn there, and a shy ghost, and Abacus P. Grumbler, and even a giant pipe plant.

Plant: Hey, are you inviting me to Ifmas because as long as there's some pipes between here and there, count me in.

Mr. Eric: And the puzzle pieces started unfolding, the color draining away.

Wowser: Wow, what's happening?

Mr. Eric: The golden puzzle piece flashed half as bright as the sun and everyone was back to normal and the little puzzle piece fell softly to the ground.

Wowser: Would you maybe all want to come over for an Ifmas party at the dungeon.

Abacus: Will you take down all the traps and monsters?

Ghost: I'll come as long as no one looks at me.

Wowser: Okay, shy ghost.

Mr. Eric: And Wowser carefully picked up the puzzle piece, its magic mostly drained.

Wowser: You should have this, Pixicato.

Pixicato: I don't think I need it. It's okay for life not to be perfect, even on Ifmas.

Sprite Alright: All right! Now you're getting it.

Pixicato: But I got to have my first real adventure with Sprite Alright today.

Sprite Alright: That's all I wanted for Ifmas.

Abacus: All right, well, if neither of you wants the magic artifact puzzle piece, I'll just go ahead and take it.

Mr. Eric: And after a long and magical day, everyone started heading their separate ways to have one last sleep before Ifmas.

Ghost: Why isn't anybody looking at me? Hello? Shy ghost, here. Okay, but I'm just gonna follow you, just, okay? Because.

Abacus: He's following us, just—

Ghost: But don't look at me, okay.

Abacus: We know you're there, shy ghost. See you tomorrow.

Ghost: No, don't look at me. Wait, is someone listening to me? Stop it, I'm shy. Not a spooky castle.

Mr. Eric: The end.

Ghost: Just because I'm a ghost doesn't mean I like spooky castles. Are you still listening to me? Stop it.



[Gentle bell music.]

Mr. Eric:

All right, Caleb and Asha, I hope you enjoyed your story. Starting next year we'll have a mix of one and two part stories as well as a lot of cool guest episodes we're already lining up.

I'd like to thank Karen Marshall O'Keeffe, my co creator, Jason O'Keefe for our artwork, Craig Martinson for our theme song, and all you kids at home who know that things never quite turn out the way you picture them, but life can keep getting better, even when it's not perfect.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme plays.]

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