

Podcast: What If World

[Episode: 127: What if Fred the Dog didn't like sticks?](#)

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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.

[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 start off with a question from a patron named Gus.

Gus: Hi, Mr. Eric, my name is Gus and I'm seven years old. My question... and I like sharks and JF Kat, and my question is what if JF Kat was riding a shark in outer space while JF Kat was eating tacos? Bye.

Mr. Eric: Oh, wow. Gus, that inspires quite the visual, I can't wait to see it. And let's add in another question from a listener named Zoe.

Zoe: My name is Zoe and I like dogs and my what if question is what if Fred the Dog didn't like sticks? Bye. Thank you.

Mr. Eric: Oh, Zoe, that is a great question. We just have to make sure we don't mention it if Fred stops by because I don't think—

Fred the Dog: Don't mention what, Mr. Eric?

[Record scratch.]

Mr. Eric: Hi, Fred! Don't mention something that you'd be upset about hearing. Oh, I'm a terrible liar.

Fred the Dog: Mr. Eric! I'm a good dog. I can handle a little bad news.

Mr. Eric: I know, Fred, but don't you have to do some shout outs.

Fred the Dog: I know you're just trying to distract me, but it's working! I've got to shout out James, who's seven and listens every night before bed and his little sister Hazel, who likes drawing and watching *Frozen*.

Mr. Eric: Nice work, Fred. Great shout outs. And thanks to James and Hazel.

Fred the Dog: Oh, thank you. I know I'm very good, wait are you trying to distract me?

Mr. Eric: Yes, I am trying to distract you. Oh, I'm so bad at this!

Fred the Dog: Well, it's not going to work, Mr. Eric. Although, I do have a lovely shout out for Bruno, who's age eight, and his sister Nina, who's age six. And I'm their favorite character.

Mr. Eric: I am not surprised, Fred. I mean, you're like my favorite character.

Fred the Dog: Oh, stop, you. Tell me the secret.

Mr. Eric: Absolutely, yes. You are going to find it out very soon. But first I've got to tell you about the incredible shrinking Nova.

Fred the Dog: Oh, what's this, now?

Mr. Eric: He's a new character made up by a patron who's good at making comics, being cool, and science, and he can shrink to atom size and grow to planet size because of the Shrink-o-Scope 2000 on his back.

Fred the Dog: Wow, he sounds really cool. I bet he's a dog, too.

Mr. Eric: You're right! He's like a little frenchie bulldog.

Fred the Dog: That sound very cute.

Mr. Eric: I know, so we should just get into the story so you can meet him.

Fred the Dog: Oh yeah! Then, let's go.

Mr. Eric: All right, let's find out what if JF Kat was riding a shark in outer space while eating tacos and what if Fred the Dog didn't like sticks?

[Record scratch.]

Fred the Dog: Wait, what was that?

Mr. Eric: Oh, sorry, we're getting. It's story time, we're... the tingalingaling is happening, so...

[Rising harp scale.]

Fred the Dog: No, you stop that tingalingaling and tell me what you just said!

Mr. Eric: I just said what if fred the dog didn't like sticks!

Fred the Dog: No you don't start the story! No no nonononono!

[Rising harp scale.]

Fred the Dog: Oh, sticks.

Mr. Eric: Fred the Dog had finally fallen into a comfortable rhythm with life and work. He got up, he went to the What House, he helped make What If World a better place. Then he went home and chewed on some sticks.

Fred the Dog: That's right, I'm chewing on sticks because I love them, they're my favorite, and no one's ever taking them away from me.

Mr. Eric: Said Fred. The way he speaks sounds a little different because his tongue is too long for his mouth.

Fred the Dog: Everybody knows that, Mr. Eric. Just like everybody knows that these are my sticks forever. And I'm just gonna bury them all in the backyard right now to keep them very extra safe.

Mr. Eric: But don't you want to answer the phone, first, Fred?

Fred the Dog: There's no phone ringin—oh I don't like when you do that.

[Picks up phone.]

Fred the Dog, Fredsident of What If World. Make it quick, I got to bury my sticks.

JF Kitty: Hiya, Fred. It's JF Kat, your predecessor as president.

Fred the Dog: Oh, no, I call it Fredsident. It's like my own thing.

JF Kitty: Well, Mr. Fredsident, I'm glad you're back to helping What If World, but all you've been doing for the past month is working and eating sticks.

Fred the Dog: I know, all day when I'm working, I'm just thinking about eating sticks.

JF Kitty: But there are more important things in life than sticks.

Fred the Dog: Name one thing.

JF Kitty: Like, space tacos. Come on, get out of the house. I'm riding around on a shark up here in outer space by myself.

Shark Gator: With me.

JF Kitty: Okay, me and Shark Gator and there's lasers and space ships and tacos, get over here.

Fred the Dog: Let me just chew on a few sticks first to whet my appetite.

JF Kitty: No, you'll ruin your appetite!

Fred the Dog: See, Mr. Eric, as long as you don't listen to the call to adventure, I get to keep loving my sticks.

Mr. Eric: Yeah, but Fred, don't you need to answer the door.

Fred the Dog: Don't you dare, Mr. Eric!

Mr. Eric: Ding dong!

Fred the Dog: Oh, for stick's sake! [Grumbles and opens the door.] Who is it?

Nova: It is I, the Incredible Shrinking Nova.

Fred the Dog: Oh hi, the Incredible Shrinking Nova. What brings you here?

Nova: Aren't you surprised to see me?

Fred the Dog: No, Tyson, the boy who made you up, he said that we friends already.

Nova: Oh, oh, you're right. Yes, we are good friends. Now, let me take you to outer space.

Fred the Dog: Sorry, no thanks you, bye.

Mr. Eric: And Fred closed the door in his face.

Nova: But we're friends, Fred.

Mr. Eric: Said Nova, through the door.

Fred the Dog: Yeah, but if I go eat one of those space tacos, then magically I won't like sticks anymore and I don't want that to happen.

Nova: Wow, you sure are a wiley one, Fred.

Fred the Dog: Yeah, I know. You can go away now, Nova. Bye-bye puppy.

Mr. Eric: But Nova shrunk down to the size of an atom and slipped through the tiniest little molecular gaps in the door.

Nova: Bet you forgot I could do that?

Fred the Dog: Oh, fine. You can hang out with me, but I'm not leaving this house.

Nova: It's okay, I have to get back from saving all of outer space from planet sized bad guys and particle sized bad guys.

Fred the Dog: But nothing in between?

Nova: Well, I suppose I could face medium sized bad guys. I never really thought about that.

Fred the Dog: Oh, that's good. So this story can be about you and how it's weird to be a medium sized french bulldog flying around in outer space.

Nova: All right, well, let me just drop off some fan mail before I go.

Fred the Dog: Fan mail! You know, I did all the shout outs this week.

Nova: Yes. I know, Fred. You've actually just got one letter from a girl named Zoe.

Fred the Dog: Only one letter? Oh, that's weird. Well, let's see what it says. It says, "My name's Zoe." Oh, hi, Zoe. "And I like dogs." Oh, me, too. What a coincidence! "And what if Fred the Dog didn't like sticks?"

Nova: Uh-oh.

Mr. Eric: And magical energy started swirling around Fred in a vicious vortex of colors and sci-fi magic stuff.

Fred the Dog: Oh, no, no. I just feel like I don't like sticks no more, suddenly.

Mr. Eric: Oh, are you sure?

Fred the Dog: Yeah, I'm over them. Although now I am feeling very hungry.

Nova: Perfect, we can go into outer space together to Maria's Taqueria and have space tacos. And JF Kat will be on a shark and probably something else crazy will happen.

Fred the Dog: Okay, Nova, I know that you're to the What If stories and stuff, but we usually don't tell people exactly what's gonna happen, you know?

Nova: Of course! Hop on my back and my Shrink-o-Scope 2000 will fly us into outer space.

Mr. Eric: Excuse me, Nova?

Nova: Yes, Mr. Eric.

Mr. Eric: I normally describe action stuff like that, so I would say, like, Fred hops on Nova's back and they fly into outer space together.

Nova: Well, you don't have to say it because I already did.

Fred the Dog: Yeah, now you both said it, so I feel like we're running late, story-wise?

Mr. Eric: Oh, right.

Nova: Oh, of course.

[Time skip noise.]

Mr. Eric: So there they were at Maria's Taqueria in outer space after an uneventful flight.

JF Kitty: Fred! You made it.

Shark Gator: We're so happy to see you.

Mr. Eric: There was JF Kat riding atop Shark Gator while munching on a taco.

JF Kitty: I'm... oh, this one's really good.

Fred the Dog: Well, I hope so! I need to find something I can love as much as sticks because I don't love sticks anymore. It's weird.

JF Kitty: Purrsonally, I don't know what you ever saw in those sticks?

Fred the Dog: They were well-balanced meal.

Nova: The bark is fiber.

Fred the Dog: The dirt is minerals.

Nova: And then the stick itself is like a tough doggie toothbrush.

JF Kitty: Sticks are not good for dogs.

Shark Gator: Yes, dog food is good for dogs.

Fred the Dog: I know, I know, but in What If World, I can occasionally indulge on a forest full of sticks. Or at least I used to.

JF Kitty: Oh, forget it! Try this dog food taco.

Fred the Dog: Okay, let me try it. Nom nom nom.

Shark Gator: Wow, you choked that down quickly!

Mr. Eric: Said Shark Gator as JF Kat ordered another round of tacos for everyone. And Maria de Jesus Ironhands the Fire Lioness brought them out.

Fred the Dog: Oh, hi Maria de Jesus Ironhands the Fire Lioness, I've always wondered—

Maria: Am I related to Jesus Ironhands the Fire Lion?

Fred the Dog: Yeah!

Maria: I'm his mother and I make all of his favorite food here. We're bound to find something that you love.

Nova: It's the best restaurant in all of outer space.

JF Kitty: You might even say her food is out of—

Fred the Dog: No, don't say it.

JF Kitty: Out of this world! [Rim shot.]

Shark Gator: [Groans]

Fred the Dog: Oh, Jojo.

Nova: [Laughs] It's a space joke!

Mr. Eric: Now, you might be wondering about now how all of these imaginary characters were hanging out in the cold, deadly vacuum of space, seemingly unharmed. But don't worry. When I finish explaining this to you, it'll all make perfect sense.

Maria: Dinner is ready!

Mr. Eric: Said Maria de Jesus, and a fleet of servers brought out almost every item of food on the menu.

Fred the Dog: Oh, that smells good.

Mr. Eric: And Freddy's tail wagged a little, but he still didn't quite seem himself.

Maria: Try a red chile enchilada washed down with horchata blanca.

Fred the Dog: I'll try a red chile enchilada washed down with horchata blanca.

JF Kitty: Enjoy this mango with cilantro!

Nova: Coconut and pelo de gato!

Fred the Dog: I'll enjoy this mango with cilantro, coconut and pelo de gat—wait, doesn't that mean, cat hair.

JF Kitty: Well, yes. I tried it first.

Nova: Crunch these blue corn peis gatas [sp?] and fluffy, puffy empanadas.

Fred the Dog: Ooh, that's a good crunch.

JF Kitty: Would you try a taco that was made by paw by JF Kat?

Fred the Dog: Oh, no thank you, it's a little more cat fur.

Shark Gator: Would you eat with us in outer space, during a shark and space dog race.

Nova: Would you, could you, with a dog?

Fred the Dog: I am a dog. Nova, guys, Dr. Seuss did a lot better job of this, so can we just drop it?

[Record scratch.]

Mr. Eric: And Shark Gator and Nova stopped speeding around outer space and Maria de Jesus shook her head and started clearing their plates.

JF Kitty: That was the greatest meal of my life.

Shark Gator: I agree.

Nova: Yes, indeed! It was delicious.

Maria: I am glad that you liked it. I am sorry that your friend did not agree. I will throw the rest in the trash.

Fred the Dog: In the what?

Maria: The trash? La basura?



Fred the Dog: La basuuuura...

JF Kitty: What's happening?

Nova: Uh-oh, this is not good.

Mr. Eric: And Fred started swimming through outer space on his way back around the side of the restaurant.

Shark Gator: How can he still be hungry? I'm stuffed and I way over 30 metric tons.

JF Kitty: Well, you may be a megalodon, but you never lived out on the street?

Fred the Dog: Where is it? Where is la basura?

Maria: I am sorry, Fred. It's not on the menu. It's trash.

Fred the Dog: You take away a dog's sticks, what does he have left?

JF Kitty: Fred, remember when we were out in the street together, eating garbage?

Fred the Dog: Oh, I loved the garbage.

Mr. Eric: And Fred had found the dumpster, back around the side of the restaurant. He was already lifting up the lid with his massive tongue, when...

Nova: I'm sorry, Fred. I had to grow to tremendous size and hold you by the scruff of the neck.

Mr. Eric: See, Nova, that's where I probably would have just described that.

Nova: Ah, yes. Why don't you describe what I'm doing now and we'll start over.

Mr. Eric: Okay, great. So Nova, the incredible shrinking dog let go of Fred and wait, no no no, don't let go of him!

Fred the Dog: Garbage! OM NOM NOM NOM!

Mr. Eric: Oh! Fred slipped inside the dumpster and was rooting around in there like an animal.

JF Kitty: Fred, you've got to stop! I remember when we used to eat that stuff! We felt terrible all the time.

Fred the Dog: Oh, that was probably the sticks that made me feel bad.

Maria: You three need to get that dog out of my dumpster and leave.

Shark Gator: Sorry, Maria de Jesus.

Mr. Eric: And Shark Gator lifted the lid of the dumpster with his massive fin and Nova shrunk back down to normal size and climbed in with JF Kat.

Fred the Dog: Grrr, get away from my garbage!

JF Kitty: Come on, listen to reason.

Fred the Dog: What would a swimmer do if they didn't like the taste of pool water, huh?

Nova: Swimmers aren't supposed to drink pool water, it's very bad for you.

Fred the Dog: Oh, well, what if football players didn't like getting concussions.

JF Kitty: Concussions are terrible and nobody likes them.

Fred the Dog: Well, what if a cat stopped enjoying eating plants in the house and then puking them in secret places?

JF Kitty: How dare you even suggest such a thing! Those are my special kitty pukes and nobody gets to take them away from me!

Fred the Dog: Well, I lost my sticks today, JF Kat!

Shark Gator: But garbage isn't the answer.

Fred the Dog: Ooooh, my stomach hurt. It's probably because I haven't had enough sticks today.

JF Kitty: Its purrobably because you just ate a bag of week-old refried beans.

Nova: At least, we're all very much hoping that they were beans.

Fred the Dog: Oh, guys, get me out of here. I don't know what's wrong with me.

Mr. Eric: And Nova and JF Kat pulled the very stinky Fred out of the garbage.

Fred the Dog: Oh gosh, I really wet, let me just... [blblblblbl]

Nova: Let me just shrink out of the way. Ooh, I shouldn't have announced what I was doing before I did it.

Mr. Eric: See, I'm trying to tell you, Nova. And sticky splashes of stuff were all over everybody, and more droplets were floating around in outer space.

Shark Gator: It should probably be impossible to smell things in space... ooh, but I can.

Nova: I'm very good at science and I can explain exactly why we're all able to smell things and breathe in outer space with a perfectly reasonable...

JF Kitty: Fred, this is all my fault! I asked Nova to bring you that letter because I wanted you to stop eating sticks and start hanging out with your friends!

Fred the Dog: Jojo Fluffy Kat, how could you?

Shark Gator: Well, you do kind of have an obsessive personality.

Fred the Dog: That's completely ridiculous, oh, I still have garbage on me. OM NOM NOM.

Shark Gator: It's so horrible. But I can't stop watching.

Nova: No tongue should be that color.

JF Kitty: Fred! Cut it out!

Fred the Dog: Oh, sorry. I guess I see what you mean.

JF Kitty: Sticks aren't entirely unhealthy like chlorine and concussions.

Nova: But any habit that makes you stop enjoying other people and activities...

Shark Gator: Is an unhealthy habit.

Fred the Dog: Wow, you three have really opened my eyes. I'm gonna turn over a new leaf, right after I jump in this garbage again.

Maria: Didn't I tell the four of you to get out of my restaurant?

Mr. Eric: Shouted Maria de Jesus, breathing a jet of fire over their heads!

Maria: LEAVE!

JF Kitty: Okay, let's go!

Shark Gator: I know a short cut.

Nova: We're in outer space. Everything's a straight line.

Fred the Dog: Oh man, she's cooked up all the garbage with her fire lion breath.

JF Kitty: That's pur...a shame, I guess.

Fred the Dog: What, you think I want to eat cooked garbage?

Maria: RARR!

Mr. Eric: And the four of them fled back towards What If World.

Maria: Come back again when you're not going to dumpster dive!

[Time skip noise.]

Mr. Eric: At the west wing of the What House where Fred had buried dozens of sticks...

JF Kitty: By digging a hole in the floor...

Fred the Dog: Yeah, I asked them to make me a stick trap door but, uh...

Nova: I think Zoe was trying to do you a favor, Fred.

Shark Gator: By breaking you of an unhealthy habit.

Fred the Dog: Does that mean that if I learn to have a stick in moderation, then I'll start enjoying them again?

JF Kitty: I hope so because I can't stand the smell of you right now.

Mr. Mouser: It's bath time, Mr. Fredsident.

Mr. Eric: Said Mr. Mouser, holding a towel and a scrub brush.

Fred the Dog: Wait a second, if I roll around in garbage, it means I have to take a bath?

Shark Gator: That's generally the rule.

Fred the Dog: Okay, I think I'm ready to give up that bad habit so we can just skip the bath altogether, right?

JF Kitty: I'm purr... afraid not.

Mr. Mouser: Let's go, Fred.

Fred the Dog: No, I'll just lick myself clean.

Nova: Your tongue is still covered in trash slime.

Fred the Dog: Oh, anything but a bath.

Mr. Mouser: I hope you remember that next time you try to eat garbage.

Fred the Dog: Sticks! Save me! [Thuds and splashes.] Oh, what good are you sticks, anyway?

Mr. Eric: The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: All right Zoe and Gus, I hope you enjoyed your story. And Tyson, thanks for adding in that cool character, the Incredible Shrinking Nova.

I'd like to thank Karen O'Keeffe, my co-creator, Craig Martinson for our theme song, the Chen-Gonzales family for feeding me and your son Eddie all of your amazing food, and all of you kids at home who know the difference between a fun hobby and a bad habit.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme plays.]