

Podcast: What If World

[Episode: 138: What if Barbies were real and they lived with evil robots?](#)

File Length: 00:20:34

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 starting off with a question left as part of a review from Dalton in Wisconsin.

Dalton asks: What if Barbies were real and they lived with evil robots?

Thank you for that awesome question, and we're gonna add one more from a patron named Nora.

Nora: Hi, my name is Nora. I'm five years old, and also my kitty.

Nora's Parent: And my favorite thing...

Nora: My favorite things.

Nora's Parent: And my what if question.

Nora: My what if question is what if monsters were made of chocolate?

Nora's Parent: So, Nora, and what if monsters were made of chocolate? Okay, press the red button.

Mr. Eric: Oooh, chocolate monsters. Oh, this is gonna be a great story.

Fred the Dog: Now let's find out what if Fred the Dog gave a shout out to Zoey from Cary, North Carolina.

Mr. Eric: Hi, Fred. And thank you, Zoey, who's eight years old and loves dogs, especially her dog, Cali.

Fred the Dog: I also got a shout out to three siblings, Naomi, Isaiah, and baby brother Laurence.

Mr. Eric: Thanks, Naomi, Isaiah, and Laurence.

And I've got two of my very own shout outs to give. The first is to Zed, who is eight years old and loves listening to *What If World* to chill out. Thank you, Zed, that makes me really happy to hear.

And then one final shout out to Ronan.

Fred the Dog: Thank you, Ronan. Thank you very much.

Mr. Eric: And thanks to Zed, Naomi, Isaiah, Laurence, Zoey, and her dog Cali. Now, let's find out what if Barbies were real and they lived with evil robots. And what if monsters were made out of chocolate? Yes!

[Rising harp scale.]

Evilicus Max: Long ago, we naughty bots were ruled by chocolate monsters. Then we escaped and found some old dolls and turned them into you, the Barbots. But the monsters still stomp these lands. So says Evilicus Max, King of the Naughty Bots and of exposition.

Barbara Bot: Excuse me, Papa? What is exposition?

Evilicus Max: It's when I explain something you need to know.

Barbara Bot: But I already know that story. You tell it to me every night.

Evilicus Max: That's called bad exposition.

Mr. Eric: Barbara Bot, a little plastic robot woman, was lying in bed while her father, Evilicus Max, King of the Naughty Bots, towered over her.

Barbara Bot: I was just thinking, instead of telling me the same story every night, maybe you could tell me tales of Dalton Wisconsin and Cleocatra, the heroes from my books.

Evilicus Max: No! You must stay safe in the factory... fortress of fire... the fire keeps chocolate monsters out and plastic doll robots in.

Barbara Bot: Okay, good night, Daddy.

Evilicus Max: Go to sleep. Engage in sweet dreams. Evilicus Max commands it.

[Robot noises and a door shutting.]

Mr. Eric: She tried to get some sleep but every time she heard the distant stomp of the chocolate monster, it would interrupt her dreams, which weren't at all sweet. But as the sun rose the next day, she had a realization.

Barbara Bot: Wait a second! Daddy commanded me to sleep and to have sweet dreams, but I didn't. I wonder if I don't have to do everything he commands...

Mr. Eric: The little plastic robot leapt out of bed and ran through the many halls of the fiery fortress past other Barbots and Naughty Bots stoking the flames that gave the castle its name.

Barbara Bot: Daddy, I think I realized something!

Mr. Eric: Said Barbara Bot. She'd found Evilicus Max in the fire gardens turning little knobs to make some fires bigger and some fires smaller.

Evilicus Max: Have you come to help me tend the fire garden? You know the fire we harvest here helps power all of What If World.

Barbara Bot: Why are you saying that like I don't already know. Are we doing exposition again?

Evilicus Max: No, that's silly. I'm just reminding you that the fire fortress factory is important to all of What If World. End of exposition.

Barbara Bot: Oh, Daddy. Listen, I want to test out an idea. Can you try telling me to do something, right now?

Evilicus Max: Mm... why do you ask?

Barbara Bot: I'm just curious. Tell me to do something. Anything.

Evilicus Max: Hmm...

Mr. Eric: Said Evilicus Max, narrowing his eyes suspiciously.

Evilicus Max: No.

Barbara Bot: Oh, please.

Evilicus Max: You dare say please to me, Evilicus Max, King of the Naughty Bots.

Barbara Bot: I always do everything you ask of me and the one thing I ask of you, you say no?

Evilicus Max: Correct. No.

Barbara Bot: Fine, then I'll try telling you something. I'm going outside today.

Evilicus Max: No, you're far too young.

Barbara Bot: I'm a Barbot. I'm 59 years old.

Evilicus Max: Yes. Such a low number. I can count all the way to a thousand.

Barbara Bot: I don't care. I'm leaving.

Evilicus Max: Oh, I knew I should have built you with a yes/no switch.

Barbara Bot: A what?

Evilicus Max: Oh, this thing on my head. This giant rectangular cube that's always pushed into the forward, NO, position.

Barbara Bot: Oh. I thought that was your hair.

Evilicus Max: It is! It can be two things.

Mr. Eric: And the giant robot sat down wearily in the middle of the fire gardens.

Evilicus Max: Oh, Barbara Bot... maybe it's time I told you about these switches and the power of Yes and No. It all started long ago—

Barbara Bot: Gosh! Will you just quit it with the exposition?

Evilicus Max: This is important. You must learn when and how to say n-n-n-n-yes.

Mr. Eric: While Evilicus Max had been expositing, Barbara Bot had switched his forward-facing NO switch back to the YES position.

Evilicus Max: That's fine, I'll just switch it back to no.

Barbara Bot: But would you please keep it in the yes position?

Evilicus Max: Yes.

Mr. Eric: And the giant robot stopped.

Barbara Bot: Wow! That really works. And could us just make a path for me to safely walk out of the fire gardens? Just til I'm gone?

Evilicus Max: N-n-n-ye-ess.

Mr. Eric: And turning a few valves, purple fires and green fires and pink fires winked out. And the little plastic Barbot started walking away from the fire fortress.

Evilicus Max: Barbara Bot!

Mr. Eric: Called Evilicus from a distance.

Evilicus Max: Stay away from the chocolate monsters! Evilicus commands–

Barbara Bot: No! I'll do what I want.

Evilicus Max: My daughter, just be careful–

Barbara Bot: Oh, will you please stop talking?

Evilicus Max: Ye...ess.

Mr. Eric: And as she walked away from the garden, the fires lit back up in her wake.

[Time skip noise.]

Mr. Eric: Rocky hills dotted the countryside and tree stumps stretched for miles in every direction and every now and then, she'd see or hear a massive chocolatey footstep.

Barbot went to investigate one of the footsteps. The footprint itself was three times as wide as her father was tall, and little traces of chocolate glinted within that footprint as the sickly light of the sun started to disappear in the horizon.

[STOMP!]

That stomp was closer than the last.

[STOMP STOMP STOMP]

Mr. Eric: And getting closer by the second! Barbot hid behind a cluster of rocks as a great chocolatey foot stomped nearby. Then she heard a strange skittering getting closer to her hiding place.

Barbara Bot: Oh, no...

Kittencore: Oh, yes.

Mr. Eric: Said a little chocolate monster that had just crept behind the rocks. It was a kittencore, with the body of a cat, the tail of a scorpion, and the head of an even cuter cat, surrounded by chocolate medusa snake hair!

[Musical sting]

Barbara Bot: Oh, please tell the giant chocolate monster I'm not here. I didn't mean any harm.

Kittencore: Oh, don't worry about them. My name's Queen Nice and they answer to me.

Barbara Bot: All those giant chocolate monsters have one little queen?

[Hissing]

Mr. Eric: The chocolate snakes on top of Queen Nice's head started whispering to each other and to Queen Nice, herself.

Queen Nice: I think you got our chocolate monsters all wrong, little girl. Why don't you come out and meet us.

Barbara Bot: Oh... ooh...

Queen Nice: You have my word we mean you no harm.

Mr. Eric: And Barbara Bot followed out the little chocolate kittencore to see that that massive monster she thought had been roaming the land for decades was just a bunch of small chocolate monsters all melted together.

Monsters: Get us out of here!

Please help us!

I've had a werewolf's butt in my face for almost 60 years!

Barbara Bot: Oh, you poor things.

Mr. Eric: Said Barbara Bot. With the sun setting, it was just cool enough that their chocolate hardened up a bit and she was able to start prying away these little monsters, one by one.

Barbara Bot: How did this happen to you? It's terrible.

Queen Nice: It's been going on for over 59 years, ever since the Naughty Bots left our side.

Barbara Bot: Oh, I know the Naughty Bots, they're nice.

Queen Nice: No, little girl...

Mr. Eric: Said Queen Nice.

Queen Nice: They're incapable of being nice. That's why we asked them to invent a nicer robot. I guess they must have seen to our last request by making you, our hero.

Mr. Eric: Barbara Bot spent all night piecing apart this giant lump of chocolate monsters while Queen Nice grabbed a giant lump of powdered sugar, just as the sun started to rise.

Barbara Bot: Okay, I got all the werewolves and the zombies and the ogres and the vampires all separated.

Monsters: Thank you.

Ah blaaahblaaah.

Brains brains?

Awoo to you.

Mr. Eric: Barbara Bot was covered in chocolate and feeling quite exhausted.

Queen Nice: That's wonderful. Now all you need to do is powder each of us with this confectioner's sugar so we don't stick together again.

[Record scratch.]

Barbara Bot: Oh, but that could take all day... and I just worked all night.

Queen Nice: Oh, please, Barbara. We've been alone for so long. We just need a little help.

Barbara Bot: Fine, I'll powder you with sugar, and then I'll get some rest.

[Sugar shaking]

Mr. Eric: And as she painstakingly powdered every piece of chocolate, Queen Nice started dragging bolts of cloth into this barren wasteland.

Queen Nice: Now you just need... to whip us all up some monster clothes so we can look extra nice.

Barbara Bot: Hey. Just because I'm a Barbot doesn't mean I know all about clothes.

Queen Nice: Of course not. But sweetie, we haven't had new clothes since those nasty, evil Naughty Bots left us all alone.

Barbara Bot: Okay, okay. I'll get started...

Mr. Eric: It took her days to even figure out how to make clothes, and weeks to make new outfits for all these chocolate monsters.

[Time skip noise.]

Barbara Bot: Okay, werechocolate. I think you were the last one.

Werechocolate: Hey, it doesn't fit over my chocolate fur.

Vampire: Blah. I look more scary than cute.

Monsters: And I look more cute than scary.

She made me the same outfit as me doppelganger.

Barbara Bot: I'm sorry, I thought you two were twins.

Monsters: No, we sometimes shape-change into evil twins made of chocolate.

Barbara Bot: I'm sorry, I really tried.

Queen Nice: And we're all very, very thankful.

Mr. Eric: Said Queen Nice.

Queen Nice: But maybe could you just make them all again?

Barbara Bot: No.

Mr. Eric: And the kittencore's queenly smile melted away. Literally. It was getting kind of hot.

Queen Nice: What did you say to me?

Barbara Bot: I said, "No."

Queen Nice: But that's not very nice to say. And after all those evil Naughty Bots put us through. Well, we need to finally make peace with those robots and we wanted to look our best.



Barbara Bot: Well, why didn't you say so. I'm missing my Papa and he's probably worried sick. Let's go.

Queen Nice: Oh, no no. We can't go near the fortress of fire. It'd melt our chocolate.

Barbara Bot: Oh, don't worry about that. I can get us in through the garden, no problem.

Mr. Eric: And Queen Nice shaped her candy face back into a smile.

Queen Nice: Really? Wonderful.

Mr. Eric: And the little candy monsters in their brand new cotton clothes marched back across the wasteland to the fortress of fire.

[Time skip noise.]

Barbara Bot: Daddy? Are you still there?

Mr. Eric: Barbot called to her father through the rainbow flames of the garden.

Evilicus Max: Yes. No one asked me to leave.

Barbara Bot: Oh, I'm sorry, Daddy. But I'm back now. Could you lower the fires so me and my friends can get in?

Evilicus Max: Yes.

Mr. Eric: And as a path appeared through the fires, the chocolate monsters swarmed into the castle. Evilicus Max called out to his daughter.

Evilicus Max: Barbot, what have you done?

Barbara Bot: Oh, don't worry, Daddy. They're here to make peace.

Evilicus Max: But their peace is not one we can accept.

Mr. Eric: Queen Nice approached, her little chocolate claws gently scratching on the factory floor.

Queen Nice: Oh, how did you get him to say yes?

Evilicus Max: Barbot...? N-n-n-n-

Barbara Bot: Oh, it's easy. He's got a yes-no switch right on top of his head.

Mr. Eric: Said Barbot, climbing up to finally switch it back into the no position.

Evilicus Max: No...

Queen Nice: A yes-no switch? But that's been our problem this whole time! Oh, my monster minions, please go and switch all the Naughty Bots back to yes mode.

Mr. Eric: And the little monsters started running through the fire fortress to find the other Naughty Bots.

Queen Nice: And please ask them never to switch to no, again.

Evilicus Max: No. Evilicus Max will not let you.

Mr. Eric: The giant rusty robot rose. A rainbow of fire danced angrily behind him.

Queen Nice: Oh, Evilicus...

Mr. Eric: Said Queen Nice.

And those little chocolate snakes that made up her hair suddenly stretched out, faster and longer and stronger than you can imagine, pushing the switch on top of Evilicus Max's head back to yes.

Queen Nice: Oh, this was too easy. [Hiss]

Mr. Eric: And then the snakes snapped the switch so he was stuck in yes mode.

Evilicus Max: Yes.

Barbara Bot: Queen Nice... this is wrong.

Queen Nice: Wrong? No, wrong is being disobeyed for 59 years. This is peace. Perfect and nice, forever.

Barbara Bot: No. Peace isn't having everyone do what you say.

Queen Nice: Well, that's only true when you're everyone else. [Laughs.]

Max, be a dear and shut these fires off, please.

Evilicus Max: Yes.

Queen Nice: Oh, it's far too hot for a chocolate monster fortress.

Mr. Eric: And Evilicus went around turning valves off and one pilot after another winked out as the fire garden slowly turned into just a bunch of pipes.

Barbara Bot: Oh, Papa! I'm sorry. Well, why didn't you tell me the truth about all this? Why'd you keep it a secret.

Mr. Eric: And Evilicus Max turned his head, even while he continued to shut the fortress down, one valve at a time.

Evilicus Max: I never wanted you to see me this way. That's why when we were asked to build you, long, long ago—

Queen Nice: Oh, would you please quit it with the exposition.

Evilicus Max: Yes...

Mr. Eric: And the little kittencore curled up comfortably on the floor.

Queen Nice: And Barbot, be a dear and help Evilicus turn this whole factory off.

Barbara Bot: But the fire fortress factory powers half of What If World!

Queen Nice: Oh, for crying out—Maxie... tell me where this one's yes-no switch is, please?

Mr. Eric: And Evilicus stood up just a little straighter in that moment.

Evilicus Max: Nowhere.

Queen Nice: Did you say no to me?

Mr. Eric: All the chocolate snakes on her head stood on end.

Evilicus Max: I said nowhere. I built her to make her own choices.

Queen Nice: Oh, fine. Then, Barbara, you just stay with me. You can work alongside your father. He'll be much happier that way.

Evilicus Max: Barbara, run away from here. Live your life. I'll be okay.

Mr. Eric: Barbara Bot stood there, frozen with fear, unable to make up her mind—

Barbara Bot: No, I didn't!

[Record scratch.]

I made up my mind right then and there.

Mr. Eric: Sorry, huh?

Barbara Bot: I wasn't gonna listen to either one of them.

Mr. Eric: Said Barbara Bot. It was a year later, Barbara wore a long jacket and a wide hat, a wanted criminal in the ever-growing empire of the chocolate monsters.

Barbara Bot: I did get away, but I'm going back there to set my father and my people free. But I could use your help.

Mr. Eric: The lights had gone out in this abandoned restaurant and Barbara Bot and a tall noble cat, and a mysterious wedge of orange cheese in a cowboy hat were the first three people to meet here since...

Cleocatra: That was a lot of exposition.

Mr. Eric: Said Cleocatra.

Cleocatra: But I do enjoy making an empire fall. [Purrs]

Barbara Bot: What about you, Cowboy?

Mr. Eric: And the wedge of cheese slowly looked up at them from under the brim of his hat?

Dalton WI: Me? Well, I reckon it's time to save What If World, or my name ain't Dalton Wisconsin.

Mr. Eric: The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

All right. Nora and Dalton, I hope you enjoyed your story. I'd like to thank Karen O'Keefe, my co-creator, Craig Martinson for our theme song, and this lot of latest reviewers, just to name a few. Thank you, Taliloh, and Charlotte, Kaylee, Simon, Luke, Ezer, Ruby, Ty-ty, Amalia, Geoffrey, Greta, Jackson, the Funny Cat, Sierra, Liz, Dorian, Maverick, Kimber, Gabe, Dalton, Aaliyah, Presley, Byron, Grace, Bridget, Lily, Ezra, Silas, Twinkie, 99999, DC, Asher, Abigail, Ruth Bader Ginsburg 97, and Niana. Whoo.

And finally, I'd like to thank all you kids at home who know the power of the words "yes" and "no" and are working hard to learn how to make safe, smart decisions for themselves.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

