[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.]

Abacus:	Greetings, listeners, and welcome back to What If World, the show where your question and ideas inspire off-the-cuff stories. I'm Abacus P. Grumbler, or Abacroak T. Frogger, if you prefer, and I'm filling in for Mr. Eric who's still stuck in the past, unfortunately. But with the right questions maybe we'll get him out this week.
	So, let's hear first from Nolan.
Nolan:	Hi, my name is Nolan. I live in Cary, Illinois, [unclear]. I really like dress up and pretend. My what if question is what if Alabaster Ribbit and Fred the Frog could turn back into Fred the Dog and Alabaster Zero? Thank you, really like the podcast!
Abacus:	Oh, thank you, Nolan. I so look forward to being a human wizard again. Though, now that I think of it, you didn't mention my name in your question. Very clever.
	Oh, and I'd also like to thank your brother, Colton, as well as listeners Chana and Edison who asked very similar questions. Now, we've got a write-in question from a patron named Bryn, who asks, "What if clouds were made of cotton candy and rained popcorn?" Mmm, delicious.
	And listeners, before we start the story, if you haven't heard episode 138, "What if Barbies were real?" As well as episode 149, "What if magic didn't exist?" then this story may be a little more confusing than usual. But I'll do my best to clue you in.
JF Kitty:	Purr, I think youre best is what got us in this mess in the first place!
Abacus:	Oh, hello, J.F. Kat. Always nice to hear you and your opinions.

JF Kitty:	Meow, let's not argue. I'm here to give a meow out to Wolfgang from Gardena, California. He's six years old and he loves building Legos.
Abacus:	Very nice. Thank you, Wolfgang.
JF Kitty:	And I've got another meow out for Arya. She's a purple taekwondo and wears a belt!
Abacus:	I think you mean she's a purple belt in taekwondo.
JF Kitty:	Whatever.
Abacus:	Well, thank you, Arya.
Fred the Dog:	One last shout out to Hannah M. From Kentucky.
Abacus:	Well said, Fred.
Fred the Dog:	She loves dogs, like me, pizza and helping people. And she's seven years old.
Abacus:	Well, thank you, Hannah M., Arya, and Wolfgang. Now, let's find out what if clouds were made out of cotton candy and rained popcorn, and what if Alabaster Zerribbit and Fred the Frog could turn back to Fred the Dog and Alabaster Zero?
	[Rising harp scale.]
Abacus:	Alabaster Zerribbit and Fred the Frog were counting cotton candy clouds across the sky when... [popping sounds] they noticed it was suddenly raining popcorn!
Fred the Dog:	I got 99 poplems, and this popcorn's one.
Alabaster Zero:	Fred, quit the corny jokes.
Fred the Dog:	Oh, you're so bossy. I think I'll promote you to... colonel.
Alabaster Zero:	Oh, amazing.
Fred the Dog:	Spelled M-A-I-Z-E?
Alabaster Zero:	You butter stop, now.
Fred the Dog:	Oh, I can go from dawn till husk.

Abacus:	But if Fred the Frog and Alabaster Zerribbit had been paying more attention, they would have noticed something strange riding those popcorn kernels of rain. Something… chocolatey.
Alabaster Zero:	Hey, shouldn't we be trying to save the world or something.
Fred the Dog:	I don't know, the world just feels so messed up lately. Can't we just do more corn puns?
Alabaster Zero:	I don't know, corn we?
Fred the Dog:	Oof. I guess we corn't. Hehehe. Oh, but maybe if we find the Queen of Frogs, she can bring magic back to What If World and I guess then things will go back to norm—
Abacus:	Fred the Frog and Alabaster Zerribbit had been snuck up upon by a pair of chocolate monsters. Normally cute and delicious, but now sneaky and sinister! … And cute and delicious. They wrapped up our heroes in cotton candy and took them back up into the clouds.

[Time skip noise.]

We are in a run down old saloon. You might remember it from the end of episode 138, What if Barbies were real and they lived with evil robots? Well, the saloon had a faded old sign and was full of a bunch of faded old wood as well as three unlikely allies. Barbara Bot, the toy robot turned vigilante, Cleocatra, former Empress of Whygypt, and Dalton Wisconsin, the wildest wedge of cheese in the west. Who's never really been in a story before, but… um… apparently he's important. I don't know. |
Dalton:	Now, I know I've never been in a story before.
Abacus:	Said Dalton Wisconsin.
Dalton:	But I just know we gotta save those Naughty Bots from the Fire Fortress.
Cleocatra:	Yes, of course.
Abacus:	Said Cleocatra.
Cleocatra:	That is what we are all here, discussing.
Barbara Bot:	Yeah…
Abacus:	Added Barbot.

Barbara Bot:	It's a weird thing for you to say right now after we've been hatching plans for the last hour.
Dalton:	I know, I know. I just felt like maybe we should recap for a second so that we knew what we was talking about.
Cleocatra:	Well, I think we have realized that the only way into the factory is to get over those walls of flame.
Barbara Bot:	And we need some kind of giant fluffy cloud you could walk on in order to do that.
Dalton:	That's right. And that cloud would have to rain something soft and fluffy and light. That way we could float down safely on it.
Fred the Dog:	[Muffled] Help!
Abacus:	They heard a distant cry for help.
Fred the Dog:	Heeeelp! We've been cobb-napped by cotton corndy.
Alabaster Zero:	I swear I'm gonna pop.
Fred the Dog:	Oh... can't ear another one? But seriously, we're in trouble!
Abacus:	And Barbot, Cleo, and Dalton saw cotton candy clouds rolling towards them, headed straight for the fire fortress.
Cleocatra:	Hm... cotton candy clouds, raining giant kernels of popped corn. That will do.
Abacus:	And Cleocatra leapt out of the restaurant, bounding from one giant kernel of popped corn to the next, getting higher and higher as she reached towards the distant clouds of cotton candy.
Dalton:	Well, I don't know how I'm gonna get up there. It's not like I can use my trusty slingshot to slingshot myself up theeeeeeeerrrreeeee eeeee-haw!
Abacus:	Dalton cried out exultantly, for Barbara Bot had indeed shot him out of his own slingshot towards the cotton candy clouds.
Barbara Bot:	Oh, now, how am I gonna get up there?
Abacus:	But Barbara was a resourceful robot. She broke down the old saloon into many pieces of wood and in an instant, she was building a ladder that reached higher and higher until it poked into the cotton candy clouds. And as she climbed up towards her friends and allies, all that was left

behind of the saloon was its sign that read, "Frog Dimension." Awfully strange name for a saloon, don't you think?

[Time skip noise.]

The cloud was speeding toward the fire fortress faster than ever, but Barbot, Cleo, and Dalton were able to find Fred and Alabaster trapped inside a candy chrysalis within the fluffy clouds.

Fred the Dog: Oh, thanks for coming to rescue us. Everybody always wants to kidnap me, it's because I'm Fredsident. Which I didn't really mind when we could just magic things better like that. I'm trying to snap with my tongue, but you know how my tongue's too long for my mouth? I don't know how to do that.

Barbara Bot: Well, don't worry, Fred. We're here to rescue you.

Cleocatra: I thought we were here to take down the chocolate empire.

Dalton: Well, I thought we were trying to free the Naughty Bots.

Alabaster Zero: What you should be worried about...

Abacus: Said Alabaster Zero, who you'd almost forgotten about, right? But he's still there.

Alabaster Zero: As I was saying, what you should be worried about is getting magic back.

Barbara Bot: Okay, okay. I hear you all. But you can't focus on every problem all at once. Then all you ever end up doing is worrying.

Abacus: Said Barbot, showing sage wisdom for a creature under a thousand years old.

Barbara Bot: We've got to take this one problem at a time.

Cleocatra: Then I think we should consider leaving them in their cotton candy cages and then [whispers hissily]

Barbara Bot: Ooh.

Abacus: You know, this is a podcast. If you whisper, people can just turn up the volume.

Cleocatra: Well, let them turn it up, then.

Abacus: Okay, well maybe they will turn up the volume.

Cleocatra:	I hope they do, because I'm going to whisper.
Abacus:	Well, maybe they will.
Cleocatra:	Okay, then. [Very quietly] I've got a secret plan.
Barbara Bot:	[Also very quietly] Oh, is it really clever.
Cleocatra:	[Quietly] Oh, yes. Very clever.
Barbara Bot:	[Quietly] Well, can you tell me?
Cleocatra:	[Quietly] Yes, of course.
Barbara Bot:	[Quietly] Well, go ahead.
Cleocatra:	[Quietly] Okay, as soon as the scene ends, I'll tell you.
Barbara Bot:	[Quietly] Should the listeners turn their volume back down.
Cleocatra:	[Quietly] Yes, the next part's going to get a little loud, they should probably turn their volume back down if they turned their volume up in order to hear us whispering.
Barbara Bot:	[Quietly] Okay, they should probably do that, then.
	[Time skip noise.]
	[Crackling noises]
Abacus:	Crystalised cotton candy cracked as Alabaster and Fred the Frog were unceremoniously tossed to the ground in the throne room of the Fire Fortress. And there stood Queen Nice, herself, a chocolate kitten monster wearing a grin that was somehow still cute, despite its maliciousness.
Queen Nice:	Oh, now I've got you, President Fred. And with no magic to stop me I can become the new president and continue my plan to turn the whole world into chocolate and other candy and junk food type stuff.
Fred the Dog:	Well, now that I know your plan, it'll be a simple matter to stop you. For you see, I am not the Fredsident, I am—
Abacus:	Said Fred, pulling off his mask!
Barbara Bot:	Barbara Bot. [Musical sting!]

Queen Nice:	Oh, wow, what a twist.
Alabaster Zero:	You think that's something. Well, I'm not Alabaster Zero, I'm...
Dalton:	Dalton Wisconsin. [Musical sting!]
Queen Nice:	Sorry, I don't know who that is. Honestly, it feels like Mr. Eric threw you into the last story but now you don't really have much of a purpose.
Dalton:	Oh, I know my purpose, and it's to stop you!
Queen Nice:	Chocolate monster guard, can you seize them already.
Abacus:	And the chocolate monster who had thrown them to the ground earlier picked the two impostors up.
Chocolate Guard:	Yes! Of course I will seize them, my queen.
Abacus:	Said the chocolate monster guard.
Chocolate Guard:	Except I'm not a guard. I am Cleocatra. [Musical sting!]
	Former Empress of Whygypt.
Queen Nice:	Hi, Cleocatra, nice stunt you pulled here with all the disguises.
Cleocatra:	Indeed, Queen Nice.
Abacus:	Said Cleocatra.
Barbara Bot:	Looks like we've got you outnumbered and surrounded.
Abacus:	Added Barbara Bot.
Queen Nice:	So it seems... or does it?
Abacus:	And with that, Queen Nice of the chocolate monsters pulled off her mask to reveal...
All:	Alabaster Zero!? [Musical sting!]
Alabaster Zero:	Alabaster Zero. Bet you didn't see that coming. [Crickets]
Cleocatra:	Wait, so none of us are the villains?
Alabaster Zero:	Yeah, I think we got a little carried away with the disguises.
	[Slow clapping.]

Queen Nice:	Bravo heroes.
Abacus:	Said the real Queen Nice, finally entering her throne room, flanked by the massive robot Evilicus Max.
Queen Nice:	You've come up with a plan so convoluted, you fooled even yourselves.
Dalton:	Oh, fiddlesticks!
Queen Nice:	And now my Naughty Bots have got this chamber surrounded. I must say, you did a good job of guessing my evil plan to turn the world into candy and junk food and stuff.
Barbara Bot:	That's because we know all your tricks.
Abacus:	Answered Barbara Bot, moving towards her estranged father, Evilicus Max, who had fallen under the control of the chocolate monsters.
Barbara Bot:	Remember how you turned off the "No" switches to the Naughty Bots?
Queen Nice:	Of course. That's how I kicked you out of this castle and took it over.
Alabaster Zero:	Well, that means they have to say yes to our commands, too.
Dalton:	Naughty Bots, arrest Queen Nice and the chocolate monsters!
Cleocatra:	For crimes against magic, humanity, and junk food.
Dalton:	So much wasted popcorn…
Abacus:	And though Evilicus Max must have heard the command, he didn't budge an inch.
Queen Nice:	Foolish Barbara Bot, I already commanded them to say "Yes" only to me!
Alabaster Zero:	Oh, I don't know. Couldn't you just be another impostor?
Queen Nice:	Of course I'm not an impostor.
Barbara Bot:	But didn't you say we guessed your evil plan perfectly?
Queen Nice:	Yeah, but…
Cleocatra:	Maybe that's because you are just guessing our evil plan.
Queen Nice:	Huh?

Dalton:	Oh, "huh" isn't a very queenly thing to say. You really sound like an impostor.
Abacus:	Evilicus Max looked from person to person, not knowing to whom he must listen.
Queen Nice:	Evilicus... look at all these disguises lying around. You must know I'm the real queen.
Cleocatra:	But with all these disguises, anyone could be Queen Nice.
Barbara Bot:	I think you've got a decision to make, Evilicus.
Queen Nice:	But you know the truth!
Abacus:	Cried Queen Nice, the little kitty monster scrambling away from her Naughty Bots just in case.
Evilicus Max:	If any of you could be Queeeeen...
Abacus:	Said Evilicus Max, saying words other than, "Yes" for the first time in many months.
Barbara Bot:	If any of us could be queen, then you can just listen to who you think is right.
Cleocatra:	And we say arrest the impostor!
All heroes:	Arrest the impostor!
Evilicus Max:	Yes, my queen in disguise.
Queen Nice:	No! Noooo!
	[Time skip noise.]
Dalton:	Well, that plan was totally flapjacks! How did you know it would work?
Barbara Bot:	I didn't, but I had to try something.
Evilicus Max:	You were very brave, my daughter.
Alabaster Zero:	And that Cleocatra was very clever.
Cleocatra:	Purr-haps. But I just wanted a nice warm fire fortress to nap in, nothing more.

Abacus:	But the once royal cat did seem a little more proud than sleepy for a change. And so they lived happily ever af—
Alabaster Zero:	Whoa, whoa, whoa, wait a minute. We're still frogs.
	[Record scratch.]
	And What If World is still missing its magic.
Dalton:	Or is it?
Abacus:	Said Dalton Wisconsin, pulling off his mask to reveal—
Alabaster Zero:	The Queen of Frogs. Wait, you're not all gonna say that in a chorus with me?
Barbara Bot:	No, we've never met her.
Cleocatra:	Yes, I don't know who this is.
Queen of Frogs:	Some people say I'm responsible for all this mess in What If World.
Barbara Bot:	Well, yeah, everyone said if we found you, we could bring magic back. Why were you dressed as a cheese cowboy?
Queen of Frogs:	You've been squatting in my restaurant with a hungry cat for weeks. The old cheese smell was the only thing keeping me from being eaten.
Abacus:	Oh, please! I said. Yes, the narrator can talk to characters in the story. It's fine.
Queen of Frogs:	Oh, there you are, Abacus. Appearing as if by magic, wouldn't you say.
Abacus:	No, I would not. Magic is gone and it's all your fault! And we've been working so hard to set things right.
Alabaster Zero:	Just please bring magic back.
Queen of Frogs:	You don't need me to.
Abacus:	Oh yes I do, I'm a slimy, warty old frog and I only like being two of those things!
Queen of Frogs:	What I'm trying to tell you is—
Abacus:	Is you're speaking in riddles again and we're not listening and that's how we got in trouble in the first place, I know!

Barbara Bot:	Excuse me, Abacus?
Abacus:	Yes, Barbara Bot.
Barbara Bot:	Have you actually tried casting a spell since you got turned into a frog?
Cleocatra:	Or did you just go around telling everyone how magic was gone.
Abacus:	Well, I did go around telling everyone that magic was gone. Oh no, but that was after I used a frog wand to cast a spell… even though magic was gone. Hang one.
Alabaster Zero:	Oh, no.
Abacus:	Oh, no, because then, remember… the wand broke and um, well, I didn't have another wand lying around, so.
Alabaster Zero:	You just needed another wand?
Abacus:	Not just a wand! I could have also tried using a stick or a plunger… really anything wand shaped.
Alabaster Zero:	What?
Abacus:	A crystal ball would have worked. Or a basketball, I suppose. Honeydew melons, they're roughly the right shape.
Alabaster Zero:	Abacus!
Abacus:	Oh, and books! I can use, mm-hmm. Plus, if you've pulled something out of a hat, 95% chance that's magic.
Alabaster Zero:	But this has been going on for months. Problem after problem, it all started feeling so hopeless.
Barbara Bot:	And that's when it's most important for us to keep hope and focus on making one thing better at a time.
Abacus:	Right. For example, I said, picking out a pencil from my beard and wielding it like a wand… Abracadachina, deus ex machina!
Mr. Eric:	And with that, I came back from the past. Whoa, whoa whoa. It's me, Mr. Eric. I'm narrating again. Oh, what a great feeling! Hi, everybody! I missed you!
Abacus:	Pipe down, Mr. Eric, I'm magicking!

Mr. Eric:	Oh, sorry, sorry.
Abacus:	Hocus pocus, blowing smoke-us!
Mr. Eric:	And Alabaster Zerribbit turned back into Alabaster Zero.
Alabaster Zero:	It feels so good to be human again and wrapped in dungaree.
Abacus:	And now I'll just turn Fred back.
Mr. Eric:	And with his last spell, Fred the Frog became Fred the Dog. Except…
Alabaster Zero:	Where's Fred?
Barbara Bot:	I don't know. He's your friend.
Queen of Frogs:	I haven't seen him since I was disguised as a cheese cowboy.
Abacus:	Is anyone here really just Fred in disguise? Show of hands.
Mr. Eric:	And Barbot, Cleocatra, Alabaster, and the Queen of Frogs stared out the massive stained glass windows of the Fire Fortress to see a distant cotton candy cloud float its way over the horizon.
Abacus:	Okay, did someone see a really long tongue hanging off that cloud?
Mr. Eric:	The end.
Cleocatra:	I can't believe we forgot the President.
	[Falling harp scale.]
Mr. Eric:	Well, Bryn and Nolan, I hope you enjoyed your story. I'd like to thank Karen O'Keeffe, my co-creator, Craig Martinson for our theme song, and all you kids at home who hold onto hope and face one problem at a time.
	Until we meet again, keep wondering.
	[What If World theme plays.]