

Podcast: What If World

[Episode: 164: What if Alabaster Zero got fired?](#)

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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 starting off with a question that was written as part of a very nice review from Abby. Abby is 10 years old and she asked, "What if Alabaster Zero got fired and Pipey-O made him even sadder?"

Oh, that Pipey-O... well, as you all know, the next few stories may be set in a place known as Alternia where our normal characters may be quite different than what we expect. And speaking of different characters, our patron Silas submitted a really cool character named Ronnie Kind Cyprus. Also known as "The Jet." Ronnie is a photographer who runs on batteries and is half rat, half robot, loves fruit, and is always happy. Wow, I like this Ronnie. So let's find out—

Dracomax: What if Dracomax gave a shout out to Montsy?

Mr. Eric: Hey, Dracomax.

Dracomax: Montsy is seven and loves to draw all kinds of dragons. She even mailed you a drawing of me.

Mr. Eric: And I actually have her drawing of Dracomax on my fridge right now.

JF Kitty: Well, I'd like to meow out Cecily and her black cat named Milo.

Mr. Eric: Thanks, J.F. Kat.

JF Kitty: Cecily is five and a half years old.

Alabaster Zero: And I'm here to give a gritty, cool shout out to Alex from Detroit, Michigan. Alex is seven, likes Minecraft and reading books.

Mr. Eric: Wow, lots of shout outs today.

Fred the Dog: Oh yeah, like mine of Ellen, who just turned four years old and loves unicorns, dragons, birdies, and playing with her big brother.

Petey the Pirate: Y'arr, then there's Isaac, who just turned six and he likes dragons, bears, his dog, Charlie, and his sister, Ellen.

Mr. Eric: Finally, one of our friends wanted to give their shout out up for another kid, so they recorded this very, very quick thing that we're gonna play for you.

Enda: This is Enda and I want my friend Winter to know that I love her.

Mr. Eric: That was so sweet, Enda. So thank you, Winter, Enda, Isaac, Ellen, Alex, Cecily, and Montsy.

Now, let's find out what if Alabaster Zero got fired and Pipey-O made him feel even sadder?

[Falling harp scale.]

[Record scratch.]

Recap: Last time on What If World: Fred the Dog licked the space-time continuum, also known as the STC, or STICK, and doing so, he sent all of What If World into another reality, the world of Alternia. Fortunately, thanks to a protective spell and her fairy-sprite powers, Pixicato was the only one who could remember what had happened. Now she's on a mission to find her president, wherever he may be.

The fate of two worlds may hang in the balance.

Mr. Eric: I'm sorry. I don't know who that was.

Recap: That's funny, I don't know who I am, either. All I can do is recap things that have already happened.

Mr. Eric: Okay, Recap, just hang tight. All that stuff you said? Well, it's gonna be really helpful for people to know.

Recap: Thank goodness! I have a purpose. I'm not just a disembodied voice floating in the ether.

Mr. Eric: But for now, we're gonna need to take a brief detour and talk about our friend, Albatross Zero.

Recap: That's right! He did say Albatross Zero. You see, in this world, Albatr-

Mr. Eric: It's okay, Recap. I got it.

Recap: Oh, fine. I'll be floating in the ether if you need me. Need me... need me...

Mr. Eric: Okay, we get it. You don't need the echo.

Recap: What echo? What echo were you talking about... about... you echo...

Mr. Eric: Oh, you really need to work on your echos.

[Rising harp scale.]

Albatross Zero was an albatross, and if you've never seen or heard of that, it's kind of like a giant seagull. They can have a wingspan of 11 feet and can live for over 60 years. Typically, an albatross spends most of their life at sea, but Albatross Zero wanted to do something else with his life. So, one day he flew inland to Alternia's Detective School.

He landed on the steps of the school in front of a little green mustachioed man.

Albatross Zero: My name's Albatross Zero, and I'm here to be a detective.

Pipuigi: Okay, my name's Pipuigi. I'm just here for the burritos.

Albatross Zero: Detectives make burritos?

Pipuigi: Well, sometimes, I'm sure. But I like the ones from the stand around the corner.

Albatross Zero: Well, you know what's even better than burritos?

Pipuigi: Tortas?

Albatross Zero: Maybe. Depends on how much you like bread. But I was referring to justice.

Pipuigi: Oh yeah, in the sewer wizard land, there is cute little monsters, all different kinds and they jumping all over the place.

Albatross Zero: Oh, that sounds cute.

Pipuigi: No, I didn't finish. If you cannot jump on the head and those little monsters touch you, you get really little.

Albatross Zero: That's terrible. As a very big bird, I find the idea of getting very little monstrous.

Pipuigi: Exactly. Listen, maybe I help you become a detective and then we get rid of all the little bitty cute monsters.

Albatross Zero: Or better yet...

Mr. Eric: Said Albatross, using his big wings to grab the little sewer wizard by the shoulders.

Albatross Zero: Why don't we become partners?

Mr. Eric: And so Albatross Zero and Pipuigi enrolled in detective school that very moment.

Albatross was the most determined student the school had ever seen, even if he didn't always learn things as fast as everyone else.

[Time skip noise.]

Albatross Zero: Stop, thief!

[Error noise]

Tester: Incorrect. Pipuigi?

Pipuigi: Oh, yeah, cease and desist, you violated the municipal code 2-Z-House-Toos-BetaMax-49.

[Correct noise]

Tester: That's correct.

Albatross Zero: I know but it just means stealing.

Tester: No, it means removal of an object from another's person other than your own person's without the permission of the person from which you're removing the person's object from.

Albatross Zero: Oh, um... okay.

Mr. Eric: But after years of study, Albatross Zero could fill out paperwork blindfolded and recite convoluted codes while gagged. Well, not really discernibly, but...

Albatross Zero: [Muffled recitation.]

Tester: Well said, Alabaster. I hereby make you a detective and your partner is Pipuigi. Now, go out and make people aware of the crime that they're committing.

Albatross Zero: Then act them to stop, the detective's code.

Mr. Eric: So Pipuigi and Albatross Zero went to work keeping Alternia safe.
[Time skip noise.]

Pipuigi: Oh, this is boring. I thought we were gonna go jump on some monsters' heads.

Albatross Zero: I know, but we learned that it takes a lot of bravery and intelligence to do good police work. And also patience. Lots and lots of patience.

Pipuigi: Yeah, that's the part I really don't like. What if we're too patient and the monster's getting into people's houses right now?

Albatross Zero: Do you really think that could be happening?

Pipuigi: I mean, we're not gonna know until we're in the houses looking for the monsters, right?

Albatross Zero: Oh, right!

Pipuigi: Well, what are we waiting for?

Mr. Eric: And Albatross Zero flew with Pipuigi on his back to the nearest house.

Albatross Zero: Open up! Recent detective school graduates!

Ronnie: Huh? Who is... it's eight o'clock at night, I'm trying to get some sleep here.

Pipuigi: Oh, look at him! He looks like a monster to me!

Ronnie: What? This is my house, I live here. I mean, yes. I'm a half-rat, half-robot with a printer coming out of my leg and a camera in my torso, but I'm not a traditional monster if that's what you're getting at.

Pipuigi: Oh, that sounds really monster to me!

Albatross Zero: Oh, what do I do? It's a monster! What do I do?

Pipuigi: There's only one thing that Pipuigi do when he sees a monster!

Albatross Zero: Oh, I know. I jump on his head!

Pipuigi: You jump on a head! Yes!

Ronnie: No, please. Come on, don't jump on my head. It's a Tuesday night, I've got—

Albatross Zero: I'll get you, monster!

Ronnie: No, ah! You're an albatross, I'm just a little half-rat, half-robot! What are you doing here?

Pipuigi: Just make sure you only jump on his head otherwise he touch you and you go weewow weewow weewow wee, and you'll get really small.

Albatross Zero: I wouldn't want to get really small. I'm big.

Ronnie: Seriously, who's your superior here? This is unacceptable behavior from detectives.

Mr. Eric: As you may have guessed, the half-rat, half-robot whose head Albatross had just jumped upon was Ronnie Kind Cyprus.

Ronnie: All right, I think there's been some kind of misunderstanding. This is my house. I live here. And you've got no right to jump up on my head.

Albatross Zero: Oh, I'm... I just... I got so caught up in catching monsters.

Pipuigi: Little furry cute monsters like that, yeah.

Albatross Zero: No, I think we just made a big mistake, Pipuigi.

Ronnie: Yeah, you sorta did.

Albatross Zero: Oh, why'd I let you talk me into this?

Pipuigi: It's the right thing to do. You gotta catch the little furry monsters wherever they're hiding. Let's go to the next house!

Albatross Zero: No, no! It's a bad idea.

Ronnie: Yeah, I think it's a bad idea.

Pipuigi: Or is it a good idea?

Albatross Zero: Oh, I never thought that maybe it was a good idea.

[Time skip noise.]

Tester: [Raps gavel] For gross abuse of power and unlawfully perching upon the head of civilians, Detective Albatross Zero is henceforth stripped of his detective-ness.

Albatross Zero: Oh, no.

Tester: And stricken from the ranks of the League of Detectives.

Albatross Zero: Oh, why!?

Tester: As for you, Pipuigi...

Pipuigi: Yeah?

Tester: We'll try to find you a less hot-headed partner.

Pipuigi: Oh, that's nice. Thank you.

Albatross Zero: What? Pipuigi, this was all your idea!

Pipuigi: I wasn't the one jumping on people's heads, no no no!

Mr. Eric: So Albatross Zero left behind his badge and exited the courtroom. The big bird didn't know what to do with himself and there was a knot of anger right in the middle of him that tightened his wings and clenched his beak and squinted up his no-longer-detective-y eyes. But when he opened those eyes, he was right in front of Ronnie Kind Cyprus's house again.

Albatross Zero: Oh, what am I doing here?

Mr. Eric: He said as his little winged fingers were knocking on the door!

[Knocking, door opens.]

Ronnie: You, again? Are you gonna jump on my head? Could you at least let me grab a helmet first?

Albatross Zero: No, no, I'm just... I'm so angry. My friend didn't stick up for me, it's unfair.

Ronnie: Oh, unfair? Kinda like a giant bird jumping up and down on you when you was just minding your own business at home?

Albatross Zero: Oh...

Ronnie: Yeah, oh.

Mr. Eric: Albatross's wings slumped and his neck bent so low that his beak was nearly touching the ground. Ronnie Kind was angry at the former detective. But, as you know, he was also kind.

Ronnie: I feel like I'm gonna regret this. What's your name?

Albatross Zero: Albatross Zero.

Ronnie: All right, Albatross. You think you was treated unfairly, right?

Albatross Zero: Yeah...

Ronnie: Now you see that you was really unfair to me first?

Albatross Zero: Yeah...

Ronnie: Well, that's the problem, see? Because unfairness has a way of spreading unseen very quickly. So next time, just make sure to use your fairmera and avoid all this mess.

Albatross Zero: Fairmera?

Ronnie: Oh, wait.

Mr. Eric: Said the robot rat, looking Albatross up and down.

Ronnie: You don't have a camera built into your torso that can measure fairness down to the nearest nanovirtue?

Albatross Zero: Nanovirtue?

Ronnie: Oh, then I guess you're just gonna have to learn fair for yourself. Sheesh, that sounds brutal. No wonder you non-half-robots are so unfair, sometimes.

Albatross Zero: Oh, but I don't like it!

Ronnie: Oh, no, the king of the sky with ten times the lifespan of a ratbot has experienced unfairness! Kind may be my middle name, Albatross, but I still don't have to make you feel better about jumping on my head!

[Door slam!]

Mr. Eric: And he slammed the door! Albatross Zero was alone. More alone than he'd ever felt. For the first time in his life, he had been the victim of unfairness rather than the beneficiary.

Albatross Zero: I solemnly swear from this day forth, I will be a champion of fairness.

Ronnie: [Muffled, through the door] What?

Albatross Zero: I said I'll be a champion of fairness!

Ronnie: I don't care. I already closed the door. I'm trying to recharge my batteries, here!

Albatross Zero: I shall range from shore to shore and defeat unfairness in all its forms.

Ronnie: Who are you talking to?

Albatross Zero: I'm trying to have a soliloquy, here!

Ronnie: Well, a speech ain't a soliloquy if someone else can hear you!

Albatross Zero: Then what's the point of soliloquizing?

Ronnie: I honestly don't know, Albatross. I'm going to bed.

Albatross Zero: Okay, Ratbot.

Ronnie: It's Ronnie Kind.

Albatross Zero: Okay, Ronnie-bot. I know I've wronged you, so if some time in the future you ever need me, you have but to call for Albatross Zero.

[Charging noises]

He must be on his charging station. I'll just leave him a note.

Mr. Eric: And so Albatross Zero wrote a note and left it on the stoop of Ronnie Kind's apartment before flying far away from Know What City.

Recap: Where he was bound? Nobody knows. What he would learn? No one could guess. Where he would get his favorite burrito, that I can tell you.

Mr. Eric: Recap, we need to move to the next part of the story, now and find out what's going on with Pixicato.

Recap: It's really late to start talking about a new character. Don't you think that's sloppy storytelling?

Mr. Eric: Well, maybe, but Pixicato's been waiting in the present this whole time. She made her way all the way to Know What City.

Recap: To find the League of Detectives!

Mr. Eric: Now you're getting it.

[Time skip noise.]

Pixicato: And I hear you are the best detectives in Know What City, so I need your help finding Fred the Dog.

Pipuigi: Oh yeah, we're the the best detectives, mostly because we're the only detectives.

Pixicato: Oh, what are you saying?

Pipuigi: I'm saying everything's so good in Alternia, who needs a detective solving a crime?

Pixicato: Well, I need help finding someone.

Pipuigi: Okay, okay, what's their Know What number?

Pixicato: Their what number?

Pipuigi: No, no. The What number's private. I'm talking about the Know What number. That's public.

Pixicato: What?

Pipuigi: Know What. Oh, this pixie is slow on the uptake.

Pixicato: I don't know his Know What number... [sighs]. Can you at least help me find my parents?

Pipuigi: Oh, you poor girl. Of course. What's their Know What numbers.

Pixicato: I don't know anyone's Know What numbers!

Pipuigi: Wait a second. You don't know your own Know What number?

Pixicato: No, I don't even know what that is.

Pipuigi: Well, you've come to the right place because we take all the people with no Know What numbers and we put them right where they belong.

Pixicato: I do not like where this is going...

Pipuigi: In a nice warm cell until someone who knows what your Know What number is claims you.

Pixicato: That is so unfair!

Pipuigi: No, it's very fair, because it's how we do things here. So just go jump into the pipe. It'll take you straight to your cell, you'll be trapped there forever or slightly less.

Ronnie: Hey, kid!

Mr. Eric: Pixicato heard as Pipuigi was trying to lead her over to a big pipe.

Ronnie: I can't believe I'm saying this, but I think I can help you.

Pixicato: Really? You know where Fred the Dog is?

Ronnie: No, who's that?

Pixicato: You know where my parents are?

Ronnie: Kid, I'm a half-rat, half-robot. My mother was a microwave.

Pixicato: That is not really answering my question.

Pipuigi: Hey, don't talk to that rat. He got my friend fired. He would have made such a good detective. It all started many years ago...

[Flashback chimes.]

Ronnie: No, they already heard that part.

[Record scratch.]

Kid, let's get out of here while he's waxing nostalgic.

Pixicato: Why should I trust you?

Ronnie: Because I'm not trying to throw you in jail right now.

Pixicato: Hmm.

Ronnie: And because I know someone who might want to help you. His name's Albatross Zero.

Albatross Zero: You rang?

Ronnie: Whoa! That's an insane coincidence. There's no way you could have got here that fast.

Albatross Zero: No, I actually, I really love the burritos by the detective school. I've been coming here for years.

Ronnie: Hey! Albatross! You can help me put these two people in jail.

Albatross Zero: Sorry, Pipuigi, but that wouldn't be fair.

Recap: And so the rat-bot and the little fairy-sprite girl hopped on the albatross's back and off they flew. Now that she had friends, would she be able to find the president of What If World? By the way, what is What If World? I only sprang into existence at the beginning of this episode. I really don't know what I'm doing.

Mr. Eric: Well, here about's where we would say, the end.

Recap: But there's still so much we need to find out?

[Falling harp scale.]

[Record scratch.]

Mr. Eric: Well, not every story ends neatly.

Recap: But it's so unfair.

Mr. Eric: Maybe it is. But it's still time to say the end.

Recap: The end? Mmmm? I wonder...

Mr. Eric: Oof. It's a good start, Recap.

[Falling harp scale.]

Well, Abby and Silas, I hope you liked your story. Looks like we'll find out a little bit more about Alternia in the coming weeks. I'd like to thank Karen O'Keeffe, our co-creator, Craig Martinson for our theme song.

And until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme plays.]

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