

Podcast: What If World

[Episode: 171: What if beds ate pickles?](#)

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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—

JF Kitty: And I'm J.F. Kat.

Mr. Eric: Jojo, are you here to do shout outs?

JF Kitty: Meow outs! First, for Dylan, who's eight years old from Illinois, one of Dylan's favorite things is her family.

And then Falunah, who turns seven on July 16th. She loves animals and has two cats named Wookiee and Obie. She also loves a good Lego project.

Patty Pan: Zoom! Patty Pan here to shout out Frankie, who's ten years old and lives in Australia. Frankie likes black panthers and circus.

Fred the Dog: Oh oh oh! I've got a big woof woof for Odin, who turned 11 on July 3rd. He lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan and loves drawing and roller blading.

And finally, one last shout out for Orson who is six years old and loves trains and making secret laboratories with his cousin, Pia.

Mr. Eric: Well, thank you Orson, Odin, Luna, Dylan, and Frankie. Now, let's hear our first question from a patron named Ronan.

Ronan: What if pickles could pick up beds and the beds ate the pickles?

Mr. Eric: Wow, Ronan. I have literally never imagined pickles and beds behaving that way. Now, I don't normally do this, but Ronan has a twin brother named Jacob, and they both asked pretty short and simple questions. So I'm gonna try to squeeze them both in. Except Jacob, you're gonna have to wait to hear yours until after the story because I think it's kind of a fun surprise. But I'll give everyone a hint that it involves a vacuum cleaner.

Now, we're gonna add one more question and this one was part of a very nice review from Grayson, who wrote, I'm Grayson and I live in Potlatch, Idaho. I would ask a question but I want to give this to my sister, Olive. I want her to know that she is the best sister I could ever ask for and I would like you to make a special episode just for her if you could. She is five and likes candy, bubble gum, and spicy chips.

Grayson, that was such a sweet message for your sister Olive.

Now, we're gonna finally crack the origin story of Recap and that'll also answer Nico C.'s question from episode 167, so we've got details from at least four kids for today's story, which means we get to do a two parter. So our story's going to have candy, bubble gum, spicy chips, pickles picking up beds and even a vacuum cleaner.

[Rising harp scale.]

It was just under a thousand years ago in What If World and young Abacus P. Grumbler still barely understood his wizardly powers so his mother, Pascaline, was teaching him something a little simpler.

Pascaline: And that, my little Abby, is how you empty the vacuum cleaner.

Abacus: Oh, mom. I'm ready for so much more than emptying the vacuum cleaner...

Mr. Eric: Complained young Abacus, pushing the start button on the vacuum cleaner and... it sucked up his loose shoelaces, right away.

Abacus: Oh, mother!

Pascaline: Abby. We learn one thing at a time, and when you are a little taller, I promise to teach you to use the vacuum cleaner. But right now can you simply take your shoes off and empty the bag.

Mr. Eric: And, grumbling, Abacus took off his shoes so his mother could work on untangling the laces from the vacuum.

Abacus: Emptying the vacuum cleaner. That's baby work.

Mr. Eric: Abacus said to himself from the kitchen, dumping the dusty bag into the trash.

Abacus: If I were a big brother, I would not have to do such things. I could make my little brother or sister do it. [Laughs.]

Mr. Eric: And Abacus rushed back into the living room.

Abacus: Mother! I have a plan. You must merely have another baby. Then I'll be the big kid of the house and you can teach me all the big kid chores.

Mr. Eric: Pascaline was losing her patience with the tangled shoe laces, so she let them stay tied up in the vacuum for now.

Pascaline: Abby, remember that your father and I are not married anymore and I am not about to raise two children by myself.

Abacus: Ooh, side benefit. You and Father get back together. That'll make it even easier to have a baby.

Pascaline: Oh, my sweet Abacus, it is not as simple as that. But you do know that we are still a family even if your father and I—

Abacus: I know, I know...

Mr. Eric: And the young Abacus stomps down the hall into his little bedroom.

Abacus: Did you hear that, little sibling? Once you are here, Mother and Father will have no choice but to get back together.

Mr. Eric: Schemed the young wizard.

Recap: If that's what you say, Abacus. [Record scratch.]

Mr. Eric: Said... Recap, an echoing voice in Abacus's bedroom.

Recap: I don't understand the first thing about the world having just sprung into existence, but if you think an imaginary little brother will get your mother and father back together, then consider me your sibling.

Abacus: [Laughs] Oh, we're going to get in such trouble together.

Mr. Eric: Abacus snuck back into the hallway, his imaginary brother close behind, and they tiptoed toward the kitchen. But not before hearing their mother on the stonephone, which is of course how people communicated before actual phones in What If World.

Pascaline: Arith, I just wanted to give you a heads' up that Abacus has been acting out a little bit today.

Abacus: Acting out? How dare she accuse me of such treachery.

Recap: Yeah! Let's go and act out, that'll teach her to accuse us of acting out!

Abacus: Hmm... brother Recap, do you understand sarcasm?

Recap: Not at all.

Abacus: Good, good. Me neither.

Mr. Eric: First, Abacus and Recap snuck into the candy drawer.

Recap: Mmm... I've never tasted this candy before. Although, to be fair, I've never really tasted anything before.

Abacus: Mm, yes, it's very good. Num num num, num num.

Mr. Eric: And moments later, they were literally bouncing off the walls! [Crashing and breaking and creaking sounds.]

Pascaline: Abby! What have you done to your beautiful kitchen.

Abacus: It wasn't me, Mother. It was baby Recap.

Pascaline: Hmm... and where is baby Recap, now?

Mr. Eric: There was a little high chair tucked into a corner. They'd put it there after Abacus outgrew it and then they'd kind of forgotten it.

Abacus: I put him in time out in the high chair.

Mr. Eric: And Pascaline went and sat next to the high chair.

Pascaline: Hello, baby Recap. Oh, it looks like you had too much candy, no?

Recap: How did she guess?

Mr. Eric: Asked the imaginary baby. Although Abacus saw chocolate all over his face.

Pascaline: I know that children are sometimes upset when their parents split up and it is very normal. And if you are ever feeling upset, you know that you can always talk to me. I love to share feelings. For example...

Mr. Eric: And she looked around at the mess.

Pascaline: I am feeling like this will be a lot of work without the help of two very handy children.

Mr. Eric: And baby Recap struggled to get out of the high chair.

Recap: I'm a very handy baby. I'll help! I'll help.

Abacus: No, I will help first. I'm even handier.

Mr. Eric: Said Abacus. And once the kitchen was all cleaned up, Abacus and Recap went to rest in their room.

Recap: What was all that talk about feelings?

Abacus: Oh, I don't know. Parents talk like that all the time.

Recap: Well, I was feeling like having more junk food so I grabbed some.

Mr. Eric: And Recap reached under Abacus's wizard cap and pulled out a handful of individually wrapped bubble gum pieces as well as a bag of spicy chips.

Abacus: Oh, Recap, you shouldn't have done that. We could get in trouble.

Recap: Trouble? I don't even know the meaning of the word. In fact, it's a wonder my vocabulary is so robust in the first place.

Abacus: Good point.

Mr. Eric: And the two of them busted open the bag of chips and ate fistful after fistful of the spiciest chips you can imagine.

Recap: Hot! Hot hot hot hot!

Abacus: Oh, we shouldn't have eaten so many spicy chips!

Mr. Eric: And Abacus and Recap breathed out a torch of flame and the top of Abacus's dresser was on fire.

Abacus: Quick, chew the bubble gum and blow bubbles around the flame.

Recap: Of course! That will deprive them of oxygen, hence putting out the fire.

Abacus: Oh, I just thought it would look cool. But that's a good idea, too.

Mr. Eric: And they chewed up bubble gum as fast as they could as the fire slowly spread and then they worked together to blow out one big sticky pink bubble.

Recap: Dear listener. A brief aside to note that outside of What If World, bubble gum is not an effective fire extinguisher. Please talk to your grown ups about proper fire safety. Yours truly, Recap.

Mr. Eric: Now the whole dresser was burning up and when the huge pink bubble was all around it, the fire slowly went out before—[POP!]

Recap: My, oh my! That's a lot of bubble gum.

Mr. Eric: And of course that was the exact moment that Pascaline opened the door.

Pascaline: Abacus, your father is here—uhm... multiplication tables. Abacus Pythagoras Grumbler!

Abacus: Uh, baby Recap did it.

Recap: How dare you sell me out.

Pascaline: Abacus, I just finished fixing the vacuum cleaner and now... ugh.

Mr. Eric: The young wizard and his imaginary baby brother were covered in sticky bubble gum. Pascaline looked sad and tired but she didn't have time to talk to them. Abacus's father was already there to pick them up. So she changed his sticky robes, wiped off his sticky face, and sent him to the front door with his backpack.

Arithmometer: Hello, Son. You seem to have made rather a mess.

Abacus: It wasn't me. It was baby—

Arithmometer: Boy, do not use the imaginary friend defense on me. As a level 20 wizard, I know that imaginary friends are a product of your imagination. So their wrongdoing is your wrongdoing.

Recap: This parent is not as cuddly as the other one.

Mr. Eric: Observed baby Recap as the three of them climbed into Arithmometer's carriage and took off toward his house.

[Time skip noise.]

Abacus was sent to bed for what he'd done to his bedroom in Pascaline's home.

Arithmometer: And there'll be no such hijinks under my roof. I took you so your mother could work on her math research but I'm working on a very dangerous new spell so I need you to stay inside your room, behind your magic shielded door. Understood?

Recap: Yes, sir, Mr. Father, sir!

Abacus: I suppose so.

Mr. Eric: Abacus went to his room as told, but left the door open just a crack. He wasn't sure what a magic proof door might do to his imaginary brother. And Abacus lay down to sleep. And it seemed but a moment later when he woke up to a noise in his darkened room.

Pickle 1: Is this the place?

Mr. Eric: Asked a tiny voice.

Pickle 2: It's gotta be the place, there's the bed right there.

Pickle 1: Okay, okay. Get on the other side and wait for my signal.

Pickle 2: I'm getting, I'm getting.

Abacus: Hello?

Mr. Eric: Asked Abacus, lighting up his magic wand to see two tiny pickles on either side of his bed. But before he could say another word—

Pickle 1: Go!

Pickle 2: I'm going already!

Mr. Eric: And the pickles started lifting up his bed and shaking it up and down.

Abacus: Recap, what's going on?

Recap: Wait for it, Abacus. That's not even the best part.

Mr. Eric: And as the pickles were picking up the bed, the mattress and box spring pulled apart, forming a mouth.

Bed: Pickles? My favorite! Om nomnomonomnom.

Mr. Eric: And the bed ate the pickles.

Pickles: Eugh.

Mr. Eric: The magic that was animating them puffed up into the air as the pickled squished with a wet splat, soaking his mattress.

Abacus: Ew...

Mr. Eric: But there were more pickles right behind them, marching into his bedroom.

Pickles: Hey, let's pick up that bed, that sounds fun.

I was just thinking the same thing.

Mr. Eric: And every pair of pickles in the house took turns lifting up the bed and then...

Bed: Nom nom nom... those are dills, nomnomnom. Bread and butter, om nom nom. [Unclear].

Mr. Eric: And in the morning, Abacus's mattress was soaked with pickle juice.

Arithmometer: Oh, Abacus. Did you have an accident?

[Record scratch.]

Abacus: No, it was baby Recap, I swear it.

Recap: Will Arithmometer believe his son? Will I get in all kinds of trouble? And why aren't he and Abacus talking more? Find out all this as well as the true secrets of my origins, which you'd think I'd remember by now, but I still don't-

Mr. Eric: Next time, on What If World.

Recap: Next time on What If World. Hey, I was gonna say that!

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Oh man. Would you believe Abacus? Do you think it's actually Recap who's doing all this? It's really hard to make heads or tails of it in What If World so we'll have to wait til next week to find out. And that's when we'll finally hear Jacob and Nico C.'s questions as well. I can't wait!

I'd also like to thank Karen O'Keeffe, my co-creator, Craig Martinson for our theme song, and all you kids at home who know that listening and learning from one another can be really tough so it's good to practice with your family, and even your imaginary friends.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme plays.]

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