

Podcast: [What If World](#)

Episode: 183: Zero Hour: The Hidden Holiday

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Transcription by Keffy

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.

Alabaster:               Hey there, folks, and welcome back to Zero Hour, the show where your questions and ideas inspire off the cuff investigations.

Fair Elise:              I'm not sure that investigation should be truly off the cuff, Alabaster.

Alabaster:               Well, how else could detective work work?

Fair Elise:              Well, you're supposed to research leads and get warrants so that you're not breaking the law in the name of the law.

Alabaster:               Our first question is from a Patron named Dante C., who asks, what if Alabaster Zero did his own detective podcast? Oh, now I see what's happening... well, thanks for giving me my own show, Dante.

Fair Elise:              Wonderful, thank you, Dante.

Fred:                    Yeah, but before things get too mysterious, I have a shout out for Elias, age nine, and his brothers Benicio and Lorenzo.

Alabaster:               Hey, whoa, eh? Are we doing shout outs on my gritty detective podcast.

Fred:                    Yes, Alabaster, we are.

Alabaster:               Okay.

Fred:                    Then I got another shout out for Miles, who just turned five. Happy belated birthday. He's the five time champion of the kindest and caring award, and he always yes to adventure and occasionally he moonlights as Black Panther.

Zach:                    Oh, and I've got a shout out for Wells, age six, who loves unicorns and play dates.

Fred:                    Then, there's Henry, age five. Thank you, Henry.

Scully:                  And then there's these brothers from North Carolina—

Fred: Oh, yeah. Nathan, age nine.

Scully: And Owen, age eight.

Alabaster: Thanks for those gritty, true crime shout outs.

Fair Elise: They had nothing to do with crime, really.

Alabaster: Now, let's get into our first investigation.

[Rising saxophone scale.]

Fair Elise: All right, which of our cases will we be telling them about, Alabaster?

Alabaster: Telling them? Fair Elise, they're coming with us.

Fair Elise: Excuse me?

Alabaster: What, am I just gonna sit in a studio and talk at them for an hour. That's lazy.com/aboutme. The me being a lazy person.

Fair Elise: I understand... sort of.

Alabaster: So, while we walk to the scene of the crime, let me tell you a little history of the holidays in What If World.

Fair Elise: is that really necessary?

Alabaster: Of course it is. The show's called Zero Hour because I charge them zero dollars for an hours of worth detective podcast.

Fair Elise: It's... it's not because your name is Alabaster Zero?

Alabaster: [Laughs] What? That could have worked, actually. What am I going to do with all these business cards?

Fair Elise: Oh, never mind. Tell us about this mystery.

Alabaster: Well, I don't know what it is. See, sometimes a What If question is hidden out there in What If World changing things around without us knowing.

Fair Elise: And the only way to find out is to follow the clues to solve the mystery.

Alabaster: Oh, that's good banter. I like how you just picked up where I left off.

Fair Elise: It's not really good banter when you call out the fact that we're bantering.

Alabaster: Why not? People shouldn't be ashamed of their banter.

Fair Elise: We're trying to talk about the mystery question.

Alabaster: Oh, right right right. Well, our only clue is that this question comes from a listener named Matilda.

Fair Elise: And this involves Alicorn and the Whatsian holiday known as Halloween.

Alabaster: Of course, we don't celebrate Halloween in What If World.

Fair Elise: No, instead, we've got an entire month known as Spooktober.

Alabaster: It's an entire month of spooky holidays. Like Swap Heads Day—

Fair Elise: Oh, and Treat or Eat... that's probably the closest to your Halloween.

Alabaster: Oh, that's right. But Treat or Eat day got canceled.

Fair Elise: Sadly, it did.

Alabaster: Maybe that's our first clue.

Fair Elise: Oh, wonderful. So why don't we skip ahead to the scene of the crime.

Alabaster: No, no! Fair Elise, it's called Zero Hour and it's a 20 minute walk to the scene of the crime, so I'm going to spend the next 20 minutes talking about the history of WhatIfian holidays.

Fair Elise: That sounds tedious.

Alabaster: Thank you.

Fair Elise: Alabaster, who's going to be editing this podcast, by the way?

Alabaster: I thought maybe you, because you've got magic and a computer.

Fair Elise: So I could, say, take out parts that were a little boring, perhaps.

Alabaster: [Laughs] I mean, if you can find any parts. So What If World's very first holiday was called First Holiday Day. They called First Holiday Day First Holiday Day because it was the first holiday that anyone ever came up with and they came up with it on the first day that anyone ever imagined a What If World.

Now the second holiday, and let me check my notes, here. Oh yes. Quite predictably the second holiday was called Holiday After First Holiday Day.

[Fast forward noises]

Now, there are a lot more holidays to talk about and maybe we'll cover them on the way back.

Fair Elise: Fascinating stuff. I definitely, probably might not edit any of that out.

Alabaster: That's a strange choice of words, Fair Elise.

Fair Elise: Only if you think about them, but let's think about this case, now. You said we're at the scene of the crime?

Alabaster: That's right. Look around. We're in the middle of the street.

Fair Elise: I see that.

Alabaster: But what don't you see?

Fair Elise: I don't see anything, really.

Alabaster: Exactly. It's Treat or Eat Day in What If World and no one's out there Treat or Eating!

Fair Elise: Pixicato told me it was canceled this year in many parts of What If World.

Alabaster: Canceled? Or stolen?

Fair Elise: Well, she did say canceled, she found out at school.

Alabaster: Then school is where we start.

Fair Elise: Then why did we just walk all the way out into the street?

Alabaster: Because it's a podcast. Gotta keep things dynamic. Now, as we walk to the Observatory—

Fair Elise: That's not where she goes to school.

Alabaster: Yeah, but it's closer. And while we walk there, let's tell everyone about the storied history of Treat or Eat Day.

Fair Elise: So, another 20 minutes about the history of an imaginary holiday.

Alabaster: Exactly. We gotta get to that full Zero Hour.

Fair Elise: That's fine. Go ahead.

Alabaster: So, when edible things first came alive on What If World there was a big problem with people trying to eat each other. That's why they came up with Treat or Eat day, where people give each other non-talking food, rather than eating one another. It all started after the first First Holiday Day Celebration, celebration.

Fair Elise: They were celebrating the celebration?

Alabaster: Naturally, because they didn't have that many holidays to celebrate back then. A young detective named Alabaster Negative 62, noticed some people had been getting eaten. So, she decided to invent Detective Day, so that she could investigate—[Fast forward sound]

--got to 12 years later.

Fair Elise: Oh my word.

[Fast forwarding]

Alabaster: And that's why those concerned with grammatical correctitude call it the Holiday In Which We Give Treats To Others In Order To Prevent Said Others From Eating Us Day.

Fair Elise: Fascinating. IF you applied yourself to your detective work like you did to holiday history, you might be—

Alabaster: Exactly as awesome of a detective as I already am?

Fair Elise: Quite. But we're at the Observatorium. Let's do some detective work.

Alabaster: These hallways are strangely empty. And the doors seem to be creaking more than usual.

Doors: [Creaking loudly]

Fair Elise: Have...

Doors: [LOUDER creaking]

Fair Elise: Do you know—

Door: [LOUD CREAK]

Fair Elise: Well, let's see if we can find Professor Aba—

Door: [CREAK CREAK CREAK CREAK CREEAAK]

Fair Elise: Abacus P. Gru—

Door: [LONG CREAAAAAAAAAAAAAK]

Fair Elise: P. Grumbler, would you stop that please, Alabaster? We don't want the Zero Hour to get too long, do we?

Alabaster: Oh, that's right. I'm at 45 minutes of historical narration. That means we only got a few minutes left to solve the case if I want to do my 10 minute Pinocle Bonus Segment at the end of each episode.

Fair Elise: Pinocle?

Alabaster: It's a card game I've never learned to play so I thought it would be fun to learn it on the podcast. You know, just to fill out the hour.

Abacus: Fair Elise! Alabaster Zero! Thank goodness you're here. I accidentally turned the foundation of the building into pudding and now we're slowly sinking into the ground. Ooh, you have a microphone.

Alabaster: That's right.

Abacus: Am I going to be on a radio show.

Fair Elise: Oh, no. A podcast.

Abacus: Oh, drat.

[Squelching and crunching noises as the building sinks into the pudding.]

Alabaster: No time for that, Abacus. We gotta find out what happened to Treat or Eat Day.

Abacus: What? It was canceled.

Fair Elise: Do you have any idea why?

Abacus: Why? We all got a note saying that how people eat other people and then spit them out as part of the celebration is a really unhealthy way to spread germs. But listen, we are literally sinking.

Alabaster: But that doesn't make sense.

Abacus: Well, I was trying to conjure a pudding cup, but I used one of the wands that someone had mysteriously chewed on. Someone other than Fred the Dog, because of course he said that he didn't chew on them. And anyway, then there was pudding everywhere.

Alabaster: No, no no. I mean. People have been eating each other, then spitting each other out, every Treat or Eat Day for centuries. Why would we suddenly change the tradition?

Fair Elise: Traditions sometimes change to suit the times. I personally didn't like all that eating and spitting out.

Abacus: All right, well, the earth is about to eat us because the bottom of the castle is pudding. We're sinking. You see out that window. That's the ground. It used to be the sky.

Alabaster: Abacus, how did you find out that the holiday was canceled?

Abacus: I had a note delivered to me. Can we please get out of here.

Fair Elise: Alabaster, he might have a point. You are up to your knees in pudding right now.

Alabaster: And who brought you the note?

Abacus: Oh, I don't know. Some alicorn.

Fair Elise: Alicorn? It wasn't the T-Rex Express.

Abacus: Uh, no, it wasn't. Come to think of it, that is strange. [Smacks lips] Ooh, good pudding.

Alabaster: I agree.

Abacus: About the strangeness, or about the pudding.

Alabaster: About everything. Mm. It is good pudding.

Fair Elise: Okay, I'm going to ask Sprite Alright to teleport us out of here, if that's okay by you two.

Abacus: Indubitably!

Alabaster: You're welcome.

Fair Elise: Sprite...

Sprite Alright: Whoa, is that Abacus's hat and Alabaster's sunglasses?

Fair Elise: Yes, they have sunk underneath the pudding. It's a long story, but could you—

Sprite Alright: All right, you know I can.

Abacus: Ugh, [splutters] oh, thank you Sprite Alright. Oh, look. The Observatory must have hit bedrock and stopped sinking, so it's just a little lower than before.

Alabaster: And it's full of pudding.

Abacus: Well, thank you, two, so much for solving my mystery.

Fair Elise: It wasn't really a mystery so much as an emergency.

Alabaster: If it's on a detective show, it's a mystery. Speaking of which, Sprite Alright, can you teleport us to the northwestern, southeastern pole?

Sprite Alright: All right, but then I gotta pick up Pixicato from soccer so you two are on your own getting home.

Fair Elise: But, Sprite, it's in the middle of nowhere.

Sprite Alright: What's that? I can't hear you over the bitter winds of the northwestern southeastern pole.

Abacus: Yes, and I actually didn't want to be teleported here. I've got some pudding to eat.

Sprite Alright: Okay, have fun, bye!

Fair Elise: Alabaster, why did you have us teleported here.

Alabaster: I'm following a hunch.

Abacus: Yes, we can all have lunch. I've got pudding for everyone.

Fair Elise: Oh, that's about enough.

Alabaster: Thanks for the protective bubble, Fair Elise.

Fair Elise: Yes, well, we have about an hour before we freeze.

Alabaster: That's okay, because we've got even less time before the end of the Zero Hour.



Abacus: Oh, Zero Hour. Because you charge people zero dollars an hour to solve their mysteries.

Alabaster: See, Fair Elise? He gets it.

Fair Elise: But his name is Alabaster Zero—

Alabaster: And we're here the alicorn cove.

Fair Elise: Why are you licking the snow?

Alabaster: Just as I suspected... it's snow.

Abacus: Ooh. What a brilliant detective.

Alabaster: But with a distinct hint of... stolen holidays.

Fair Elise: And you can taste that in the snow?

Abacus: Shh! Don't question his methods.

Fair Elise: I sort of wonder if he's making it up as he goes along.

Alabaster: Of course I am, Fair Elise. This is a podcast.

Voice: Who's there?

Abacus: Aah... that was not the voice of an alicorn.

Alabaster: Look, but there go the alicorns, flying off to every corner of What If World with little letter carrier bags strapped between their wings.

Abacus: That is adorable.

Fair Elise: Abacus, you're a civilian. You should stay back and let us handle this.

Abacus: But I'm a wizard. You know what my magic can do.

Fair Elise: All the more reason for you to stay put.

Alabaster: Come on out, Santaphant, the jingle is up.

Santaphant: It's Alabaster and Fair Elise, and you must be, um...

Abacus: I'm Abacus P. Grumbler. We know each other. We're both ancient magical beings.

Santaphant: If you say so, Mr. Grunty. Come have some warm cider and roasted peanuts.

Alabaster: Not before you confess, Santaphant! You stole Treat or Eat Day and you're trying to steal all the holidays.

Fair Elise: Alabaster, you can't just go making wild accusations like that.

Santaphant: Well, in a manner of speaking, you are correct.

Fair Elise: Well, I am sorry. I—how did you know?

Alabaster: Weren't you listening to my monologue about the holidays?

Fair Elise: Oh, uh, yes. Which is how I know that Santaphant... um... takes...

Alabaster: Uses alicorns to deliver ideas and take What Ifs back to the northwestern southeastern pole every Ifmas.

Abacus: Of course... it's so simple now.

Alabaster: Why'd you do it, Santaphant? Why'd you steal Treat or Eat Day?

Santaphant: And I have a question for your in response.

Alabaster: Of course he does.

Santaphant: Why do you celebrate the holidays.

Alabaster: That's easy. No work, no school, presents, candy, and sometimes dressing up.

Santaphant: Well, I think you've answered your own question, then.

Alabaster: Because the holidays were too awesome. You just wanted everybody to celebrate Ifmas, a holiday about idea, hoo hoo. Can't eat an idea.

Santaphant: Well, now you're on to something. See, a holiday is an idea, there's no reason for one day to be different from all the others except for an idea that we share. [Sentimental music starts up]

Alabaster: Wait, what's happening. Where's that music coming from? Fair Elise, can you edit this out?

Fair Elise: No, it's bleeding through the microphones, I'm afraid we're stuck with it.

Alabaster: For crying out loud.

Santaphant: And the ideas we feed, they grow. The happy ones, the sad ones. The funny ones, the angry ones.

Fair Elise: Oh, and people have been worried that Treat or Eat Day wouldn't come this year.

Santaphant: There were too many What Ifs about the holiday so it had to change. It's not gone. I didn't steal it. Everyone's just taking some time to figure out how they can enjoy an old tradition in a new way.

Alabaster: You're monologuing on my podcast?

Abacus: It's really hard to stop him.

Santaphant: So if the holidays look a little different this year, let it be your chance to try something new. Maybe you'll love it, maybe you'll think it stinks. That's not as important as sharing something new with the people you love.

Abacus: Wonderful, a cryptic answer. Tell us how to make the holidays fun.

Santaphant: I can't.

Alabaster: Of course.

Fair Elise: Ugh.

Abacus: Why not?

Santaphant: Because no stranger can tell you how to celebrate with your loved ones.

Abacus: We aren't strangers, Santaphant.

Santaphant: Every one of you has an interest. Your own special way of looking at the world.

Abacus: We went to college together.

Santaphant: So brainstorm some ideas and pick something out.

Abacus: We were roommates if you recall.

Santaphant: Because we can make any activity fun and inclusive with a holiday spirit.

Abacus: I gave you that red hat!

[Record scratch]

Santaphant: I remember an old wizard giving me a hat, but it was in a different color.

Abacus: I'm pretty sure it wasn't.

Santaphant: Hey, I'm doing an inspiring speech here.

Alabaster: I think we need to solve the hat mystery.

Santaphant: So take back Trick or Eat Day. Figure out a new Whatsgiving, make an Ifmas, you'll never forget.

Abacus: Here, I found a picture on my crystal ball. Ifmas 1304. You're wearing that hat in red and I just gave it to you.

Santaphant: That's not me.

Abacus: It's a giant snow white woolly mammoth in a red hat.

Santaphant: Okay, it's me.

Abacus: I know that.

Santaphant: I thought instead of Treat or Eat day, we could change it so we just play tricks on each other.

Alabaster: We could call it Treat or Trick Instead of Eat Day.

Santaphant: Well, Abacus, did you like my Treat or Trick Instead of Eat Day trick?

Abacus: If I'm not being honest, not really.

Santaphant: Oh, are we at the part of the holidays where we're very honest with our loved ones?

Abacus: Mm... yes. Yes, yes.

Santaphant: Well, you're my best friend.

Abacus: You're my best friend, Santaphant! It stinks we aren't seeing some people for the holidays this year.

Santaphant: Hoohoo hoo, I know.

Abacus: But I feel good having a cry about it.

Santaphant: Me tooooo. [Sad trumpet] I'm all stuffed up.

Fair Elise: Well, I guess we solved the mystery?

Abacus: Okay. I think we've tried enough trick or treats for one day.

Santaphant: Yeah, but did we find any fun ones.

Abacus: Not really. But I had fun not finding them, together.

Santaphant: Me, too.

Alabaster: I kind of want to go celebrate Treat or Eat Day with Tabby Tallulah.

Fair Elise: And I really want to get pack to Sprite Alright and Pixicato. I wish there were some magical being with a fleet of alicorns that could fly us home.

Santaphant: It's called a miracle of alicorns, oh ho ho ho.

Fair Elise: But can we fly one home.

Santaphant: Yes, one should be back in about 30 minutes.

Alabaster: Oh, perfect. That means we can start on the next episode of Zero Hour. I think I'll call it The Mystery of the New Traditions and I'll spend the next 20 minutes thinking out loud about fun things I might do with Tabby Tallulah.

Uh, I could brush her. I could comb her. I could try to give her a bath, but that never works very well.

Fair Elise: Get off grooming, Alabaster.

Alabaster: Oh, I could brush her teeth. She hates that. Yeah, maybe I'll do that the day after the holiday.

Fair Elise: [Sighs]

Alabaster: Ooh ooh ooh, I could air out her litter box. Are you getting all this, Fair Elise?

Fair Elise: Oh yes, of course, yes. Capital ideas, all.

Alabaster: We could name the capitals of What If World, yes. I think there's only one, so far, but there's probably others.

Fair Elise: [Sigh] Absolutely unendurable, Alabaster.

Alabaster: You're welcome.

[Rising scale]

Well, Dante and Matilda, I hope you enjoyed your story.

Fair Elise: And we'll play Matilda's question for you right now.

Matilda: Hi, my name is Matilda and I really like alicorns and I am seven years old, and my what if question is What if Santa tried to take over Halloween?

Matilda's Dad: Bye!

Matilda: Bye!

Alabaster: I'd like to thank Karen O'Keeffe, our co-creator.

Fair Elise: Craig Martinson for our theme song.

Alabaster: And all you kids at home who know that even though the holidays change.

Fair Elise: You are imaginative and hopeful enough to make them wonderful, no matter what.

Alabaster: And until we meet again, I'm going to start playing Pinocle. [Shuffles cards]

Fair Elise: No. No, you're not serious.

Alabaster: It's what the children want, Fair Elise.

Fair Elise: Ah, yes yes. I'll keep rolling, then.

Alabaster: Keep Pinocle-ing.

Fair Elise: Keep Pinocle-ing...

[What If World theme song plays.]