

Podcast: [What If World](#)

Episode: 185: The Hat Trick (President Elect: Part 2)

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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.

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 finishing out a two-part story about the next  
president of What If World.

Fred:                    Oh, but first we've got some shout outs.

Mr. Eric:                Okay, Fred.

Fred:                    Like for Alfie, who's seven, almost eight, from Galway, Ireland. And his  
big sister Ella, and his even bigger sister, Aisling, who's doing a chemistry  
PhD in Edinburgh. Alfie love science, soccer, and engineering.

JF Kat:                  Er, I've got a meow out for Azalea, who loves drawing and hugging her  
new baby sister Allegra. Congrats on becoming a big sis!

Fred:                    I want to do shout out Miles [unclear], who's nine years old and has a  
bearded dragon named Cheetah.

JF Kat:                  Then there's Willem, age eight, who loves me, JF Kat!

Cthunkle:               Finally, Miriam, who's six years old, lives in New Jersey, and loves to build  
things and write stories.

Mr. Eric:                All right, we're going to finish out our two part story and we'll start with a  
little recap.

[Radio scanning stations]

Poppa Loo:              Previously, on Poppa Loo's News, I declared Fair Elise the next president,  
and then, uh, well then, nothing much of interest happened so I started  
scatting like this, on the radio. [Scats]

Mr. Eric:                Uh, Poppa Loo, actually, um, something sort of interesting did happen.  
That's where the story left off.

Poppa Loo: Really? I had no idea.

Mr. Eric: Yeah, you see, these hats full of spider webs seemed to be climbing onto people's heads and making them say "Fair Elise" like they were zombies. You didn't catch any of that?

Poppa Loo: No, sir, I certainly did not.

Mr. Eric: Yeah, and then Alabaster and Fair Elise were investigating, and they met Fred, and he flew them to the What House to go see if someone was trying to take it over?

Poppa Loo: No, I didn't catch any of that.

Mr. Eric: Oh, well, that's where we left off.

Poppa Loo: If you say so. Folks, remember to turn into Poppa Loo's News for minute-by-minute coverage of these exciting election results. Which have already been declared, so they're really not exciting. So... maybe I'll just keep scattting.

Mr. Eric: Okay.

Poppa Loo: [Scattting badly]  
[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: President-Elect, Fair Elise, and Alabaster Zero, had just been dropped off near the What House by their friend Fred the Dog.

Fred: Okay, byeeeee!

Alabaster: Oh, we could probably have used his help.

Fair Elise: Oh, let him enjoy his retirement. There's nothing I can't handle with my detective partner.

Alabaster: Oh, Fair Elise.

Mr. Eric: And as Fair Elise and Alabaster Zero approached the What House, they saw, as you might have guessed, a creature of unimaginable horror and squishiness, wrapping its many tentacles around the What House.

Cthunkle: [Laughs evilly] Yes, feed me the power of What If. Befuddle the minds with misinformation and make me, Cthunkle, the one, true, deserving president.

Alabaster: Cthunkle. Cthunkle, indeed.

Fair Elise: Oh, dear, you two are in a scene together again.

Cthunkle: What's wrong with that?

Alabaster: What's wrong with that.

Fair Elise: You two don't hear it?

Cthunkle: No.

Alabaster: No?

Fair Elise: I mean, it's like a scratchy voice contest.

Cthunkle: There is no contest.

Alabaster: Yeah, because my voice is the scratchiest.

Fair Elise: Oh, let's just get on with it. It's so late, and I just turned president at midnight.

Cthunkle: Oh, I think you'll find you're sorely mistaken, Fair Elise. I am sure word has already spread across What If World of Fair Elise's treachery.

Mr. Eric: Said Cthunkle, reaching inside the What House, to flick on the radio with a tentacle.

Poppa Loo: [Still scating badly]  
[Radio clicks off]

Cthunkle: Okay, that's not what I expected to be on the radio. You know, in the movies, when they turn the radio on, it's always like, the exact news story that they wanted you to hear.

Alabaster: Yeah, that's always bothered me.

Fair Elise: Oh, it's so unrealistic.

Poppa Loo: I agree.

Mr. Eric: Said Poppa Loo from the radio.

Cthunkle: No matter. They shall learn soon enough as my power is absolute.

Fair Elise: Oh, I'm afraid there's no such thing as absolute power, Cthunkle.

Cthunkle: Oh dear. I smell a lesson.

Alabaster: The only lesson you're getting is how to fit an ever shifting number of tentacles into a prison jumpsuit.

Cthunkle: What? Simply cut out the leg holes and make it a prison dressing gown.

Alabaster: Oh yeah, well, that would work.

[Record scratch]

Cthunkle: Oh, okay. Now that we figured that out.

Mr. Eric: Cthunkle bent one of his tentacles together as if he were snapping, and a bunch of spider web hats started skittering out of the woods toward Fair Elise and Alabaster.

Alabaster: Oh, that's upsetting.

Fair Elise: Yes, I really don't like the visual of the spiderwebs moving in the hats.

Cthunkle: I'm sorry. It's happening. That was the What If question. [Laughs]

Mr. Eric: Alabaster picked a stick off the forest floor to fend off the advancing hats, and Fair Elise drew her wand. Fair Elise's magic was nearly exhausted after saving others all night long. But Fair Elise was the kind of person who dedicated her life to helping others and before she even knew what she was doing, she'd used the last of her magic to put a protective bubble around Alabaster.

Alabaster: Fair Elise, what are you doing?

Fair Elise: I've got the best chance of getting away.

Alabaster: Fair Elise!

Mr. Eric: Alabaster struggled in his bubble, but it was so small he could barely move. And he watched his fellow detective zip and weave through the trees and into the sky, chased by a swarm of crawling, jumping, and even flying, hats.

Cthunkle: [Laughs] It is only a matter of time, Alabaster.

Alabaster: Stop this, Cthunkle! I thought you changed.

Cthunkle: I have changed. Fair Elise didn't truly want to be president.

Mr. Eric: He said, as a ten gallon hat was gaining on the fairy flying through the sky.

Cthunkle: I am simply helping her.

Alabaster: You're about to turn her into a spiderweb head.

Cthunkle: Oh, don't worry. Those hats just help me control the way people think. That way I can force everyone to make this world a better place.

Alabaster: You know, I may sometimes be a rotten detective, but there's no way I'm buying your story.

Mr. Eric: Alabaster's bubble was so small and tight he'd been forced into a crouch, so he tucked his body and started doing somersaults toward Cthunkle.

Cthunkle: Please, Detective. You cannot stand against me.

Alabaster: I can't stand at all, right now. I'm in a fairy-sized bubble.

Cthunkle: It's a figure of speech.

Alabaster: Well, stand, crawl, or roll, I will always fight against injustice.

Fair Elise: Fair... Elise...

Mr. Eric: Echoed the fairy from under a ten gallon hat that had finally caught her.

Cthunkle: Ah, you see. Those under the caps control will assume that she used them to cheat her way to the presidency before falling victim to her own magic. Then they will change their vote to Cthunkle for President.

Alabaster: What makes you think they're going to vote for you?

Mr. Eric: Alabaster was rolling closer and closer to the giant squidopus. Dozens of hats had clung to the outside of Alabaster Zero's bubble. The hats couldn't get through the spell, and so they got crumpled as the detective rolled closer to Cthunkle.

Cthunkle: They will want to vote for me when I save them from the horrors of the spiderweb hats.

Alabaster: I don't know. Demonstrating you have control over the hats that no one else can control? Sounds kind of incriminating.

Cthunkle: Uh, well, um.

Mr. Eric: Alabaster was only a foot away from Cthunkle.

Alabaster: Wouldn't it be better if you fell victim to the hats, and Fair Elise didn't?

Cthunkle: How do you mean?

Alabaster: Well, because then no one would suspect that you were the one that set the hats on everyone in the first place, and Fair Elise falling victim to a hat, I mean, that just means she can't control them. I mean, you gotta follow your own magic rules logic in this frame job.

Cthunkle: Oh, quite clever, Alabaster. I merely have to find a way to get these hats upon me. Well, without having them control my mind of cour—

Alabaster: Alabaster had taken his last little somersault onto the tentacle of this great beast and all of the dozens of hats he'd collected along the way crawled up to Cthunkle's head, and...

Cthunkle: Fair... Elise...

Alabaster: That's right, buddy. Fair Elise, your new president.

Mr. Eric: All the animated hats across What If World started slowing, as if they were falling asleep. Which meant... that Fair Elise was falling out of the sky, inside a ten gallon hat.

Alabaster: Oh, this is more tumbling than I wanted to do tonight.

Mr. Eric: And Alabaster quickly scrambled and rolled, right under Fair Elise, and BONG, caught her on his protective bubble as the spell on the bubble and the spell on the hat, both finally wore off.

Fair Elise: Alabaster, did you save me?

Alabaster: You saved me first, partner.

Fair Elise: Still, I'm just really shocked.

Alabaster: I mean, come on, don't act too shocked.

Fair Elise: Right... I mean, I'm really proud.

Alabaster: Well, don't' be too proud. The spell's about to wear off of Cthunkle, too.

Cthunkle: [Laughs] Merely a temporary setback. The damage of the spiderweb hats has already been done.

Poppa Loo: Well, you heard it there first, folks. Cthunkle is still confident he can take over What If World despite the fact that he just spent the last five minutes laying out his evil plan in excruciating detail.

Cthunkle: What? What is that?

Fair Elise: You didn't know, Cthunkle? Radios in What If World can often hear you just as well as you hear them.

Cthunkle: But that is logically impossible.

Alabaster: It might be impossible, but it's still awfully convenient.

Cthunkle: Well, there are logical rules to how these things work.

Poppa Loo: To those just tuning in, President Fair Elise and her partner in crime-solving, have just solved their last case together.

Fair Elise: Oh, I'm sure it will not be our last.

Poppa Loo: I'm sure at this very moment, they're saying some sort of cool catch phrase.

Cthunkle: You see, it's not clear whether or not he actually hears us.

Poppa Loo: Breaking news, Cthunkle is confused.

Alabaster: Don't worry, Cthunkle. You'll have a lot of time to figure out how radio works from your jail cell.

Cthunkle: Oh, I'm going to have a radio from jail this time?

Fair Elise: Yes, prison reform is going to be top on my ledger.

Cthunkle: Do you think that your more ample, gargantuan horrors from beyond the universe could get a more spacious cell?

Alabaster: If it'll reduce recidivism? Maybe.

Fair Elise: Okay, lots of big words today. We should probably wrap this up.

Cthunkle: Fair Elise, may I make one last request?

Fair Elise: It needn't be a last request.

Cthunkle: Could I wear that ten gallon hat upon my mantle. I think it'd make me look cool.

Fair Elise: Oh, of course. Oh, now you look like a proper stagecoach squidopus.

Alabaster: Oh, are there any more of those ten gallon hats lying around?

Cthunkle: Don't steal my thing, Alabaster.

Alabaster: It's not your thing. You just put the hat on five seconds ago.

Cthunkle: I've decided it's my thing, though.

Alabaster: Fair Elise, you're the president. Tell him I can wear a ten gallon hat, too.

Fair Elise: Um, that's not a proper use of my authority, Alabaster.

Alabaster: Oh, what's the use of having a president for a friend?

Fair Elise: Uh, that I'll help make the world a better place.

Alabaster: Ugh, better place if only I could wear a ten gallon hat.

Cthunkle: You can. You just have to acknowledge that it was my thing, first.

Alabaster: Not a chance, hot pants.

Cthunkle: I'm not wearing hot pants. Remember? Ever shifting number of tentacles, and—

Alabaster: It's just an expression.

Mr. Eric: The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Well, Miriam and Izzy, 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 know that persistence and teamwork can overcome any villain. Although, sometimes it takes longer than a 20 minute story.

Until we meet again. [Radio scanning, followed by Poppa Loo scattling]

Keep wondering.



Poppa Loo: [Coughs] Oh... [more scattng] Oh, that was exhausting. Okay. Any of you still have the radio on—

[What If World theme song plays.]

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