

Podcast: What If World

[Episode: 197: What if bubbles ate cats?](#)

File Length: 00:22:04

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 from a patron named Ayla.

Ayla: Hi, my name is Ayla. I'm six years old and I live in Seattle, and my what if question is what if an asteroid crashed into What If World and it could talk? Thank you! I love your show!

Mr. Eric: Ooh, a talking asteroid! We've never had one of those. Now, I want to add one more question from a listener named Dennis.

Dennis: My name's Dennis and my what if question is what if bubbles ate cats?

Dennis's Parent: Okay, and how old are you?

Dennis: Five!

Dennis's Parent: And what is something that you really like a lot?

Dennis: Cats and bubbles.

Dennis's Parent: Do you also like robots?

Dennis: Yeah. And dinosaurs.

Dennis's Parent: Thank you, Mr. Eric. We love your show!

Mr. Eric: Oh, those hungry bubbles! So let's find out what if an asteroid crashed into What If World and it could talk and what if bubbles ate cats?

[Rising harp scale.]

- Mr. Eric: Long, long, ago on What If World... and I know I've said that before but now I really mean it. This was hundreds of millions of years ago. An asteroid came crashing towards the planet, and...
- Asteroid: Oh, that hurt!
- Mr. Eric: Said the asteroid. Now, normally, a crash like that might be an extinction level event. But fortunately, this asteroid was carrying a bunch of dinosaurs and all different other life forms who then went out and populated What If World.
- Dinosaur: Good thing we were wearing our seatbelts when that asteroid crashed.
- Q-Rex: Everybody give it up for seat belts!
- Asteroid: I didn't have a seatbelt, ow!
- Mr. Eric: Said the asteroid, still feeling woozy from their crash. But all the dinosaurs went off to find their own way in the What If World, leaving that lonely asteroid.
- Asteroid: I wonder how I'm gonna pass the next several hundred million years. Maybe I'll count the stars. Hmm... Well, one... pretty sure, anyway. That one's gonna be another star. Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. There's two. And there's a star... no, that's a pterodactyl.
- Pterodactyl: I consider myself a star!
- Asteroid: I didn't mean it in the figurative sense, but thanks for talking to me, I'm awful lonely.
- Pterodactyl: Sorry, I didn't hear that, I'm flying away!
- Asteroid: Oh, phooey.
- Mr. Eric: And there, the asteroid lay, for, as they somehow predicted, several hundred million years, right up until a few years back when archaeologists uncovered this asteroid and realized that it had magical properties that made it perfect for crystal balls. After that, the asteroid was very popular for a time as miners and prospectors from all over What If World came back to the giant asteroid and started chipping away tiny pieces of it.
- Asteroid: Go on, take a piece, yes, there's plenty to spare.

Pterodactyl: Thank you!

Asteroid: Aren't you that pterodactyl I done met several hundred million years ago.

Pterodactyl: Maybe, if I learned to time travel.

Mr. Eric: And the pterodactyl flew away and the asteroid got smaller and smaller as they were carried away one piece at a time. There was hardly anything left of the now little asteroid, who found that they were lost somewhere in this expansive mine. So all the workers had left about two years back, now. All except one who'd just arrived.

Abacus: All right, my little robot.

Mr. Eric: Said Abacus P. Grumbler.

Abacus: I got Whendiana to give you a solar powered charging station so I'm just going to leave you at the edge of this expansive mine and every day you can go looking for the last piece of crystal ball. I'm sure it's going to be really good and it won't break when J.F. Kat knocks it off a shelf.

Robot: Hello, Papa.

Abacus: Well, I'm not actually Papa.

Robot: Okay, Daddy.

Abacus: No, no, I'm not a daddy. You're a full grown robot with all the programming you need to survive so this isn't abandonment. It's your job.

Robot: Don't go, Papa. I miss you already.

Abacus: Can you program yourself to not miss me?

Robot: Okay, done. I do not miss you. I simply miss the programming that allowed me to miss you.

Abacus: Just find the asteroid. I've only got a few dozen crystal balls left and if I run out of those, I won't be able to magically watch old cartoon shows from What Is World.

Robot: And that would be bad?

Abacus: Catastrophic, yes.

Robot: Okay, to avoid catastrophe, I will find this asteroid. Papa, Daddy. Daddy, Papa.

Abacus: I'm just gonna go.

Robot: Wait, what is my name?

Mr. Eric: Asks the robot, but they were only answered by the howling wind.

Robot: Hmm.

Mr. Eric: She looked down at her heavily armored mining robot chassis and saw her model number. K8E3.

K8E3: K8E3. I am K8E3.

Mr. Eric: Said K8E3.

K8E3: Reporting for duty. Teeheehee. Nobody heard that.

Mr. Eric: K8E3 worked very hard for two whole years and that brings us back to our present. And so she went drilling into the very bedrock of What If World. And as you may know from our recent stories, the center of What If World is a place where all kinds of ideas can pop out and come to life without warning!

K8E3: Hmm. I expected to find asteroid. Instead there is a bubble. Another bubble. Several more bubbles.

Mr. Eric: These bubbles suddenly shot up through the crack in What If World. But they didn't quickly pop like most bubbles. Instead, they stayed low to the ground, shining, and searching.

K8E3: Bubbles, what are you looking for? Bubbles?

Bubble: [Bubbly noise]

K8E3: Does anyone here speak bubble?

Asteroid: I've been around long enough I think I picked up a word or two in the bubble language.

Mr. Eric: There was a little shining chunk of a strange crystal right next to the spot where K8E3 had just drilled.

K8E3: I did not understand you.

Asteroid: Oh, [yammers] picked up a word or two of Bubble in my journeys.

K8E3: In your journeys? You have been stuck underground for hundreds of millions of years according to my scans.

Asteroid: But the rest of me has been in crystal balls all over What If World. And before that, we've been through the universe.

K8E3: You. You are the last asteroid. I need to bring you to Abacus. There will be a catastrophe if I do not.

Asteroid: The only catastrophe you need to be worried about is them there hungry bubbles.

K8E3: What do you mean?

Bubbles: [Yowl]

Asteroid: Them bubbles say they want to go and eat them thar kitties.

K8E3: Why would they want to do that?

Asteroid: Well, you never seen a kitty pop a bubble before? Once they pop, they just can't stop.

K8E3: Oh no, poor bubbles.

Asteroid: And now them bubbles are eating the kitties.

K8E3: Oh no. Poor kitties.

Asteroid: And I think you and me oughta do something.

Mr. Eric: And so, K8E3 and that asteroid launched a plan so wild that as I tell this story to you now, I still have no idea what it is yet.

[Time skip noise.]

Mr. Eric: Meanwhile, back at Abacus's workshop, he opened his closet door to find that all his crystal balls were gone.

Abacus: What is the meaning of this?

JF Kitty: Meow, there's an explanation for that.

Mr. Eric: Said Jojo Fluffy Kat, also known as J.F. Kat.

Abacus: Were you crashing my crystal balls again for your own amusement?

JF Kitty: Crashing them, yes. For my own amusement? Well, also yes, but it actually was serving a purpose this time.

Abacus: What purpose could it possibly serve?

JF Kitty: Well, you know that hole in the middle of What If World?

Abacus: Oh, that was several stories ago. I'm sure it's been worked out by now.

JF Kitty: No, you can't just forget about problems and hope they work themselves out, so I had to take your crystal balls and throw them into the hole to fill it up.

Abacus: You couldn't have tried dirt? Or rocks?

JF Kitty: Well, there were lots of people there and they were all using the dirt and rocks.

Abacus: Really.

JF Kitty: Plus the magic of the balls perfectly sealed the hole in the world shut.

Abacus: Blast! You know that magic is always an airtight excuse for anything.

JF Kitty: It is? It is, yes! I knew that it was magic. It wasn't about breaking things for fun.

Abacus: Well, I suppose I should be grateful to you for saving the world. But now I don't have a single crystal ball left.

JF Kitty: I think one is presently floating towards us.

Abacus: What? Crystal balls don't float. Though it does shimmer rather like one.

Mr. Eric: But it wasn't a crystal ball at all. It was a bubble that had slipped out from that crack in the bedrock of What If World and as it flew through the open window of Abacus's workshop, it didn't head toward the wizard.

JF Kitty: Sorry crystal ball or bubble or whatever you are. As much as I want to pop you, it would be rude to do it in front of Abacus.

Abacus: Yeah, so he'll probably just wait until I go out. Jojo, this is where you come up with some snarky response. A witty rejoinder? A perfectly punishing pun?

JF Kitty: What's going on here?

Abacus: I think you need to work on your enunciation.

JF Kitty: There's no time for perfect puns meow. I'm kitty-literally being catnapped.

Abacus: But you still sound like you're behind a foot of glass. Or perhaps bubble, I suppose. Well, back to work.

Mr. Eric: And as Abacus bent over his magical workshop table, Jojo Fluffy Cat floated back out the window, trapped inside a bubble that had eaten him!

JF Kitty: I always knew it would end this way! Well, I guess I better take a nap.

Mr. Eric: The bubble that had eaten Jojo floated farther up into the sky.

JF Kitty: Putting a Tabbypus on Abacus.

Mr. Eric: Where it was headed, who could say? What would become of J.F. Kat? Your guess is as good as mine!

JF Kitty: I'll workshop that.

K8E3: Don't worry little kitty. We will save you with our very good plan.

Asteroid: We've been working on great plan all this time.

Mr. Eric: Okay K8E3, Asteroid, we're ready to hear your plan!

K8E3: Oh, we thought you were coming up with it.

Asteroid: What kind of narrator are you, anyway?

Mr. Eric: No, I was doing the scene with Abacus and Jojo. You were supposed to be coming up with a plan.

K8E3: But we got as far as chopsticks.

Mr. Eric: Chopsticks?

Asteroid: Yeah, well then we couldn't find no chopsticks.

Mr. Eric: But you don't have any chopsticks.

K8E3: No. But maybe they would have been helpful. As narrator, you should have made some appear.

Mr. Eric: But I'm just hearing about the chopsticks now. Oh, would you look at that? There's hundreds of bubbles with cats trapped inside and they're all floating higher up into the sky.

K8E3: Good thing cats always land on their feet.

Asteroid: I don't know if they do from 30,000 feet.

K8E3: They are at 3,000 feet, tops.

Asteroid: Are you sure?

K8E3: I am a robot. I am programmed to be sure.

Asteroid: I don't know. I think we should measure it.

K8E3: Okay. I will get out a tape measure.

Mr. Eric: And so, K8E3 and the asteroid tried to measure up into the sky until they realized neither one of them could fly.

Asteroid: Why don't I call up my friend pterodactyl? She's an awful good flyer, that one.

Mr. Eric: And when the asteroid thought about pterodactyl, they realized Pterodactyl was carrying around a little piece of the asteroid as a jewel on her necklace. And as it shown with a wavy pink light, she could hear the voice of the asteroid.

Asteroid: Pterodactyl, we need your help! It's urgent!

Pterodactyl: Oh, my! I'll be right there!

Mr. Eric: And Ptera flew over in a split.

Pterodactyl: Oh no, the bubbles are eating the cats! I'll save them.

K8E3: No, no no. We just need you to fly up with this measuring tape.

Mr. Eric: Um, K8E3, I don't mean to "note" you, but maybe this flying creature could help with saving the cats?

K8E3: Asteroid, I just came up with a plan. We should get the dinosaurs to help.

Asteroid: Oh, what a great plan that is. I knew you had it in you.

Mr. Eric: [Clears throat.]

K8E3: Is your throat sore, Mr. Eric?

Mr. Eric: No, no, I just was remembering how I helped you come up with that plan by essentially telling it to you.

K8E3: Now is not the time for your wounded ego.

Asteroid: There's kitty cats to save!

Mr. Eric: UGH. And so pterodactyls flew in from all over What If World and they flapped their wings and the wind from their wings got all the bubbles to float together—

K8E3: He's really phoning this one in.

Mr. Eric: Oh... phoning it in, am I? [Thunder crackles] And with that, the skies darkened and the bubbles full of cats formed together to make a cat-eating bubble cyclone that started spinning its way through What If World, sucking up every cat in the land!

Asteroid: Oh, I think we done made Mr. Eric a little mad.

Mr. Eric: And even though K8E3 and the asteroid weren't cats, they still found themselves sucked up by the wind this bubble cat-nado was generating.

K8E3: Bubbles, have we offended you in some way?

Bubbles: We are sick of being chased and popped willy nilly.

Asteroid: We understand, but my name's not Willy Nilly.

[Record scratch.]

Bubbles: Why not? It's a perfectly good name.

K8E3: Do you actually have a name?

Asteroid: I was thinking maybe I'd go by Dinoroid.

K8E3: Dinoroid.

Bubbles: That sounds like a sickness that no one wants to get. I'd go with Willy Nilly.

K8E3: Wait a second, you used to only speak Bubble language.

Bubbles: Our intellect has grown as we have formed together in this bubble cyclone.

Asteroid: And your rhyming abilities.

Bubbles: Yes, our rhymes are formidable and these cats are quite edible.

K8E3: That was a nice rhyme except the part about eating people.

Mr. Eric: Hey, sorry, all of you are in immediate peril. Those cats are eventually going to stop napping and try to pop their way out. Shouldn't the three of you be trying to—

Asteroid: You're right. Willy Nilly it is, that's my new name.

K8E3: Oh, Willy Nilly, you are my best friend.

Bubbles: I don't know you well enough to say this, but that name really suits you.

Mr. Eric: The wind was picking up and angry cats were trying to claw their way out of a massive twirling, twisting cyclone that was tearing up everything in its path. But apparently nobody here cares about that so let's see what Abacus is up to!

[Time skip noise.]

JF Kitty: [Distantly] Oh no, I'm stuck in a bubble!

Abacus: Oh, getting a little windy outside. Let's close the window. All right. I've got my iron hot and my protective iron mitts. Now I just need to press this patch down and carefully iron it onto my robe. I now have finally done it and all who see Abacus P. Grumbler will know he's a member of the Cheese of the Month club.

Asteroid: [Distantly] Getting spun around real quick. I'm sick.

K8E3: [Distantly] I just spit up some circuits.

[Shenanigans continue in the distance / background.]

Abacus: Patches and cheese! Patches and cheese! Two of my favorite things are these! Patches and cheese! Also baby wallabies.

JF Kitty: [Distantly] No, stop napping! This is one of those rare times I'm going to tell you not to nap!

Abacus: There's an awful ruckus going on outside. Ah! A bubble tornado full of cats. Now that's a catastrophe. [Laughs] Nobody heard that...

JF Kitty: Why isn't anyone narrating this?

[Time skip noise.]

Mr. Eric: And as we finally rejoin, K8E3, Willy Nilly, J.F. Kat, and the bubble cat-nado, we find them in the midst of an epic tea party? [Record scratch.]

K8E3: Mm, pass the bubble.

JF Kitty: Meow, make sure you don't pop it.

Asteroid: We learned our lesson not to pop a bubble.

JF Kitty: Me too. I'll never pop a talking bubble again.

K8E3: It's so nice that all talking cats and bubbles can now coexist peacefully.

Mr. Eric: Hey, I thought there was a huge battle or something going on.

Asteroid: Oh, we're past that, Mr. Eric.

K8E3: Oh no, I still do not have a crystal ball for Abacus.

JF Kitty: Purr, why don't you just use the crystal bubbles?

Bubbles: What a fine idea. We're perfectly magical and if cats try to pop us, we'll simply eat them.

JF Kitty: Well, also we won't try to pop you because of our new found... okay, I caught myself... tried to pop you a little just then. It was... I'm still adjusting.

K8E3: Kitty-proof crystal balls. That must have been our plan all along.

Mr. Eric: Oh, come on. You had zero plan. There was just a giant battle. What happened in the battle?

JF Kitty: I guess you missed it!

K8E3: I just hope you were narrating something interesting.

Mr. Eric: No. No, there were specifically explosions happening.

K8E3: Would you pass another exploding crumpet.

JF Kitty: Presently passing. [Explosion]

Mr. Eric: Oh.

Bubbles: We just needed to get to know one another and respect one another enough.

JF Kitty: That we didn't want to pop and/or eat one another.

Asteroid: [Yammers] missed it.

K8E3: I am not sorry you missed it. It was hard to understand.

Asteroid: Oh, all right, I'll reiterate a little more clearly. You just got here. You see bubbles and cats and bubbles and cats we go way on back, way on back [yammers] space so many bubbles and cats getting along just fine. Yeah, that's right, I meant space cats traveling around in [yammers] space bubbles. Now, you might think these are simply the ramblings of a mad asteroid, but I tell you what. Maybe they are, because I'm several hundred million years old and I don't really remember all that much some days.

Mr. Eric: The end.

Asteroid: Now, wait, I haven't finished my anecdote!

K8E3: Anecdotes are supposed to be shorter.

Asteroid: Well, [yammers] ten million years or so, so when the first bubble cat colony was started on the moon of a distant planet—

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: All right, Dennis and Ayla, I hope you enjoyed your story.

Fred the Dog: Oh, wait, Mr. Eric. I got to give a shout out to Rohan, age five who lives in the UK.

JF Kitty: I'm here to give a meow out to Alden Kingsley, who's three years old.

Fred the Dog: I wasn't done! I also got Miles P., who's eight, and he loves science.

Alabaster Zero: Alabaster Zero, here, to give a sly shout out to Teddy Mostow, age seven. He's very fond of his dog, Polly, and he also loves to draw.

JF Kitty: Purrry sure I get the last shout out for Kasha, age 11. Kasha says, I am 11. I like pizza and my cat, D.J. Sounds like a cool cat.

Mr. Eric: And 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 not every argument needs to end in an epic battle. Just a little listening can really do the trick.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme plays.]

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