

Podcast: What If World

[Episode: 202: The Case of the Missing What If Characters](#)

File Length: 00:21:41

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 question from a patron named Ryan.

Ryan: Hi, Mr. Eric. My name is Ryan and I like Roblox, and my what if question is what if Mr. Eric got sucked into What If World to help Alabaster Zero with a case of missing what if characters? Bye, I love your show!

Mr. Eric: Ryan, what a great question. I just feel like maybe you didn't get the memo about me trying not to get sucked into What If World these days.

Alabaster Zero: It's too late, Mr. Eric. [Record scratch.]

Mr. Eric: No, okay, Alabaster, you don't have any power here. Abacus has his magic and Cthunkle has his interdimensional powers and Fred, he can pull me to What If World with his tongue, but you're just detective. How are you gonna get me to What If World?

Alabaster Zero: Why, the only way I know how. I'm gonna noir-ate you there.

Mr. Eric: You're gonna narrate?

Alabaster Zero: It's called noir-ate when I do it, Mr. Eric.

Mr. Eric: Hold on a second. Don't we need to get another question first? Yeah, see? We have a question here from Lily.

Alabaster Zero: Oh no. Her question's part of the mystery so we can't listen to it yet, or we'd know exactly what was gonna happen.

Mr. Eric: Well, then, couldn't we solve the mystery faster?

Alabaster Zero: That would be cheating, Mr. Eric. How dare you?

Mr. Eric: So we can't hear the question but you somehow know that the question has to do with the mystery?

Alabaster Zero: Don't question the questions, Mr. Eric. We're late for a date with mystery.

Mr. Eric: We're going to meet Mr. E, my mysterious alter-ego?

Alabaster Zero: No, just plain mystery this time. Unless he's part of the mystery, but that would... that seems like that would be confusing.

Mr. Eric: All right, I'll come along this time, but please try not to let anything bad happen to me?

Alabaster Zero: I pinky care.

Mr. Eric: Don't you mean pinky swear?

Alabaster Zero: No, I pinky care. Like, I'd be sad if something bad happens to you, but I mean, I can't promise that. It's not how life works.

Mr. Eric: That actually makes sense.

Alabaster Zero: It was dark, as night time often is. Like the sun got something stuck in their eye and closed it that it wasn't out anymore. That's when Mr. Eric showed up.

Mr. Eric: OH, oh oh! You're already noir-ating. Okay, well, let's just remind everyone that the what if question is what if Mr. Eric got sucked into What If World to help Alabaster Zero with a case of missing what if characters?

Alabaster Zero: Plus a secret mystery question from Lily.

Mr. Eric: Oh, I hate getting sucked through this microphone! Ugh!

[Rising harp scale.]

Alabaster Zero: I sat in the middle of my office. It was emptier than usual. A knock came on my door, a door that read: RIAF EROZ.

Mr. Eric: No, it says Zero Fair. You're reading it backwards because you're inside.

Alabaster Zero: Some smart alec was at the door.

Mr. Eric: I'm actually a smart Eric, and thank you for the compliment.

Alabaster Zero: I looked up from the picture frame of my dear Tabby Tallulah, my kitty had gone missing, only leaving a cloud of fur sticking to every surface of my office. It wasn't much to go on. But I'd find her.

Come on in, whoever you are, I said to the mysterious figure.

Mr. Eric: It's me, Mr. Eric. You noir-ated me here.

Alabaster Zero: Get to the case, I told him. And you better be ready to pay up.

Mr. Eric: I'm a podcaster, Alabaster. I can't pay you anything.

Alabaster Zero: Then you can be my chauffeur, I said. And threw him my car keys.

Mr. Eric: Don't you want to hear about the mystery first?

Alabaster Zero: I heard the what if question.

Mr. Eric: Okay, but you were pretending not to know that it was me, earlier, so I just didn't know where we were as far as the exposition goes.

Alabaster Zero: We were about to get in the car. Let's ride.

Mr. Eric: Okay, sure. Where are we headed?

Alabaster Zero: Same place I always go when there's a mystery afoot.

Mr. Eric: Oh no. You don't mean... Cackula's house...

Alabaster Zero: Cackula's house.

Mr. Eric: Alabaster, you can't accuse Cackula of every crime!

Alabaster Zero: Oh, I learned that three seasons ago and then I apologized and he invited me to a comedy show and I've been meaning to visit him for months, but it's just been hard to get out lately.

Mr. Eric: You mean ever since Fair Elise became president?

Alabaster Zero: No. [Record scratch.] Ever since I didn't have a chauffeur. Now keep driving.

[Time skip noise.]

We drove on in my sleek, black car, the engine running like a cute little kitty cat that you were scratching under the neck. Mr. Eric didn't know it but he was inching closer to my terrible secret and how terribly secretive the secret was.

Mr. Eric: Am I supposed to pretend not to hear you noir-ating?

Alabaster Zero: We arrived at Cackula's spooky mansion before Mr. Eric could ask any more questions.

Mr. Eric: You know, we're sitting right next to each other. I feel like we could have had a conversation.

Alabaster Zero: Before we could even knock on the door, it swings open with a creak. CREAK!

Cackula: Alabaster Zero, ho ho ho ho ho! I am so relieved that you're here.

Alabaster Zero: It sounded like we were too late for his stand-up comedy set.

Cackula: You missed my 30 minute ventriloquism set with my reflection in the mirror!

Mr. Eric: But I thought vampires didn't have reflections.

Cackula: That's what makes it so funny!

Alabaster Zero: What happened, Cackula?

Cackula: Well, first I hid behind the curtain, and then I threw my voice with vampire magic so it seemed like it was coming from my reflection.

Mr. Eric: No, I think he means what happened to make you so upset.

Alabaster Zero: Oh, I did want to hear about the show, but I guess we should start there.

Cackula: Well, when I stepped out from behind the curtain after only a tight 35 minutes of invisible ventriloquism, the audience had disappeared!

Mr. Eric: Are you sure they didn't just quietly leave while you were hiding off stage?

Alabaster Zero: Unlikely. Cackula's even funnier than Whoop Wolf, the werewolf comedian.

Cackula: That's very generous, but we are merely contemporaries, both very funny in our own way.

Mr. Eric: Okay, well, what makes you suspect that they disappeared?

Cackula: Suspect? He still does not believe.

Mr. Eric: It's just, even if you were visible in the mirror, that's not actually ventriloquism, you're just talking and they're seeing your reflection.

Alabaster Zero: Mr. Eric, you poor soul.

Cackula: He does not understand the subtleties of my comedic genius.

Mr. Eric: You can say that again.

Cackula: He doesn't understand the subtleties of my comedic genius.

Mr. Eric: Okay, okay, I get it, I get it. Let's just investigate the scene of the crime.
[Time skip noise.]

Alabaster Zero: Cackula had built a little black box theater inside his mansion.

Cackula: Well, it's not really my mansion anymore. I let wayward creatures from all across What If World stay in these many rooms.

Mr. Eric: That's very thoughtful.

Cackula: All they have to do is attend one of my open mics each week. Needless to say, I have a lot of vacancies.

Alabaster Zero: Ooh, good one.

Mr. Eric: Okay, so here's the room. It's empty like you said, and you just admitted that some people don't like your comedy too much.

Alabaster Zero: But him admitting it is what makes him so funny. You're really not getting it.

Mr. Eric: And here's the mirror you were talking into.

Cackula: That is not my mirror.

Alabaster Zero: The plot thickens.

Mr. Eric: So someone switched your mirror?

Cackula: No, no no. That is but a picture of my mirror.

Mr. Eric: This is very clearly a mirror.

Alabaster Zero: No, Mr. Eric. Cackula had a talking mirror, of course, and this mirror isn't talking. It's just a painting of a mirror, painted with mirror paint so it's just as reflective as a mirror.

Mr. Eric: I am so confused.

Alabaster Zero: Someone out there is turning talking mirrors into reflective paintings of those mirrors that can't talk.

Cackula: Now you can understand my concern.

Mr. Eric: If talking creatures are disappearing, then that's definitely a mystery. But what I can't understand is why you were doing a ventriloquism act with a mirror that you were trying to appear to be talking through even though your reflection couldn't show and also the mirror could talk on its own in the first place?

Alabaster Zero: We don't have time to explain how comedy works to you, Mr. Eric.

Mr. Eric: I don't think there's any way you could explain it.

Alabaster Zero: If what if characters are in danger, we've got to check on Fair Elise's family.

Mr. Eric: Yeah, let's go.

Alabaster Zero: You drive. And I threw my keys at him again. Jingle jingle jingle, keys, smack.

Mr. Eric: Hey, Alabaster? How am I supposed to drive to their house? Don't they live on top of a cloud?

Alabaster Zero: Yeah, you just drive up, silly.

Mr. Eric: I'm from What Is World. We don't really drive up there. Are you sure you don't just want to drive?

Alabaster Zero: We were driving toward the answer to our mystery, just as Mr. Eric was driving toward my terrible secret of terror.

Mr. Eric: That doesn't sound good, Alabaster.

Alabaster Zero: What are you doing, Mr. Eric? I told you to drive up!

Mr. Eric: And I told you I don't know how!

Alabaster Zero: Well now we're gonna drive off that cliff.

Mr. Eric: Well, there wasn't a cliff until you noir-ated one there!

Both: [Scream]

Sprite Alright: All right, all right, settle down, you two. Why were you driving off cliffs right underneath my house?

Alabaster Zero: Sprite Alright had saved us with a quick teleportation and now we were shrunk down inside of her thimble house inside of our shrunken down car that Mr. Eric was still very rudely driving. Errr braking sound! Crash!

Mr. Eric: That's it, Alabaster! I told you I wasn't comfortable driving in What If World. Next time, you drive.

Alabaster Zero: And he threw the keys back at me. Kajingle jingle, acrobatic flip, catch!

Mr. Eric: I don't know why your catches get to be so much cooler than mine.

Sprite Alright: All right, Alabaster, I figure you're here because Pixicato has gone missing?

Alabaster Zero: Oh no! We were too late.

Mr. Eric: Was she at Cackula's comedy set, too?

Sprite Alright: Was my daughter, who is in grade school, attending a late-night comedy show inside a stranger's house?

Mr. Eric: So that's a no?

Sprite Alright: Oh, no, we were planning to go. Apparently his invisible ventriloquism through a talking mirror is even better than Whoop Wolf's howling at the sun set.

Mr. Eric: At the sunset or at the sun set. And is the joke that he's just howling at the sun rather than the moon?

Alabaster Zero: For 34 minutes. Second best comedy set of the year.

Mr. Eric: Okay.

Alabaster Zero: Now, let me guess, Sprite Alright. When you went to collect Pixicato to head off to the show, all you found was a picture of frame.

Sprite Alright: With a painting of Pixicato.

Alabaster Zero: With a painting of a mirror that—of Pixicato, your daughter, yes. Obviously.

Mr. Eric: That's obvious?

Alabaster Zero: Of course it is.

Mr. Eric: Great, no, I'm just really not sure why you need me. You're doing a pretty good job on your own.

Sprite Alright: Alabaster, are you not telling Mr. Eric quite everything just yet?

Alabaster Zero: Sprite Alright didn't realize that I was waiting for a dramatic reveal later in the story.

Mr. Eric: Oh, boy.

Alabaster Zero: Fortunately, she didn't know my terrible horrible secret of terrible horror and how it got even more tantalizingly terribly horribly secretively awesome with every passing minute.

Sprite Alright: Alabaster does not know how to drive a car, Mr. Eric.

Mr. Eric: Oh, really?

Alabaster Zero: Oh, when you say it like that it doesn't sound as juicy of a secret as...

Mr. Eric: Ah, Alabaster. Admitting you don't know something is the first step to learning it.

Alabaster Zero: I know that but all the other steps are so embarrassing!

Mr. Eric: Well, if you've got a hunch as to where we need to go and Sprite Alright can teleport us back down to the ground, then we can have a Driver's Ed lesson on the way.

Sprite Alright: No, my daughter is missing. I'm gonna teleport you straight to where you're going.

Mr. Eric: Oh, yes. Of course. We'll do the driving lesson on the way back.

Alabaster Zero: I whispered my hunch into Sprite Alright's ear so that Mr. Eric wouldn't know where we were going.

Mr. Eric: I thought I was like your temporary partner. Shouldn't you t—

Alabaster Zero: I also whispered it into his ear so that he would know and Sprite Alright would know and I would know, but the listeners wouldn't know.

Mr. Eric: Well, they'll know as soon as we get there.

Alabaster Zero: Okay, it's Fred's house. We're teleporting to Fred's house.

Mr. Eric: You know that Fred lives with me, right?

Alabaster Zero: Of course I know that.

Mr. Eric: So we're going back to where we started at the beginning of the episode?

Alabaster Zero: No, no.

[Time skip noise.]

So we found ourselves back to where we started at the beginning of the episode.

Mr. Eric: Mm-hmm.

Alabaster Zero: It was almost morning and Fred had snuck outside onto the quiet streets. Almost too quiet. Actually not very quiet because he was howling at the sun.

Fred the Dog: Awwo woo woo! Ow ow awooo! Hello, good morning, Sunshine! The Fred says hello!

Mr. Eric: Hey, Fred.

Fred the Dog: Mr. Eric, what are you doing here?

Mr. Eric: I could ask you the same question.

Fred the Dog: Oh, please don't because the explanation would be fairly incriminating.

Mr. Eric: If you can let yourself out every morning then why are you crying and stepping on me at 6:30?

Fred the Dog: Oh, because I know you like it better when you get to take me out.

Alabaster Zero: Is that the real reason, Fred the Dog?

Fred the Dog: Uh, yeah, of course it is. I'm not trying to sneak out every morning to practice howling at the sun.

Mr. Eric: I could have been sleeping in for the last six years.

Alabaster Zero: And why would you be howling at the sun?

Mr. Eric: Oh, don't tell me. You're the werewhoop? Or is it the Whoop Wolf?

Fred the Dog: At sunset every night, I become unspeakably hilarious.

Alabaster Zero: It's always the ones you least suspect.

Mr. Eric: Wasn't this the first suspect we went to?

Fred the Dog: I was the funniest creature in all What If World, and I would have gotten to stay that way if it weren't for that meddling Cackula and his invisitrilloquism.

Mr. Eric: It was the invisitrilloquism, really?

Alabaster Zero: Fred started digging nervously into the ground. Like an ostrich trying to hide their head, or a dog trying to dig into the ground on a hot day or something. No, let's go with the first one. But I pulled out my handcuffs and my slime-resistant tongue-cuffs and I told him, the jig is up, Fred!

Fred the Dog: Oh, don't remind me of his invisible jig. It's so hilarious, oooh.

Mr. Eric: Wow. I'm starting to think I really need to see this set.

Alabaster Zero: Fred started digging in the dirt again, and what did we see but picture frames. Piles and piles of empty picture frames.

Mr. Eric: Not entirely empty. They have paper teeth around the inside edges!

Alabaster Zero: You've been siccing these picture frames on What-Ifians just because they liked Cackula's comedy set!

Fred the Dog: No, it's not like that!

Alabaster Zero: You're under arrest for the picture framification of Pixicato and the other people but that wouldn't have sounded as good.

Fred the Dog: Oh, yeah, I get it. But I would have never sicced a picture frame on Pixicato!

Mr. Eric: Oh, good, Fred. I thought you were turning bad for a minute.

Fred the Dog: Not bad. Just sad! When I was president, I would find these people-eating picture frames and bury them so that I could chew them

up later because they're really good for sticks. But ever since Fair Elise became president, I just... stopped eating sticks.

[Duh duh DUUUUUNNNN!]

Alabaster Zero: [Gasps]

Mr. Eric: What!?

Alabaster Zero: Just then, one of the dirt-covered picture frames lunged out of the ground toward Mr. Eric. I didn't have time to do anything except narrate what was happening while standing perfectly still!

Mr. Eric: What? No! Save me!

Alabaster Zero: And in an instant, it had chewed him up and turned him into a picture, too.

Mr. Eric: No, it's still happening. It's really slow and ticklish. But I don't want to be tickled today! Or eaten.

Alabaster Zero: But it was too late.

Mr. Eric: No, not quite yet. It's only up to my neck. If you would just stop narrating for like five seconds...

Alabaster Zero: And five seconds later... he'd been eaten.

Fred the Dog: Well, I really felt like I should have done something. But you just have a really good way of capturing tension with your narration. It's enchanting.

Alabaster Zero: Fred, you don't feel like yourself since Fair Elise became president.

Fred the Dog: I thought I'd enjoy retirement, but now I'm just laying around so I tried to do the comedy set but that wasn't panning out. I don't know what I'm doing anymore. [Sniffles]

Alabaster Zero: [Cries] I was crying like a baby. A big, tough, baby who was crying because tough babies are tough enough to show their feelings. Well, I feel the same way, but I'm still gonna do what I do best, solving mysteries. And you've still got to do what you do best—

Fred the Dog: Solving mysteries?

Alabaster Zero: Eating sticks!

Fred the Dog: Eating sticks, yes!

Alabaster Zero: We can use the things we love to help fight back the sadness just a little bit at a time.

Fred the Dog: Alabaster, can you help me find the missing picture frames?

Alabaster Zero: That depends. Can you eat some sticks? In the form of picture frames? Thus freeing the people trapped inside those picture frames?

Fred the Dog: Yeah, that's why I was asking.

Alabaster Zero: No, I figured. I was just trying to find a cool detective partner dynamic, you know, with us two.

Fred the Dog: What about Mr. Eric. [Gnawing]

Alabaster Zero: Frankly, I don't think he's detective material, but don't tell him I said that.

Mr. Eric: You don't think I'm detective material?

Alabaster Zero: I'd learned a lesson that day. That people who have been turned into paintings and pictures by being eaten by picture frames might still be able to hear you if you talk about them.

Mr. Eric: No, that's not the lesson. You just gave the lesson to Fred, how trying to do the things that bring you joy rather than nothing at all can be part of the healing process.

Alabaster Zero: I'm pretty sure it's the picture thing.

Fred the Dog: So wise.

Mr. Eric: Okay. Well, why don't you two hop in the car. Fred, you can sniff out the picture frames and Alabaster, you can practice driving us to them.

Alabaster Zero: Mr. Eric was about to learn a lesson that Fair Elise had learned long ago. [Car revs.]

Mr. Eric: Okay, you're stuck in neutral. And revving the engine is kind of just wasting gas.

Alabaster Zero: That Alabaster Zero learns from his mistakes.

Mr. Eric: Now you're slowly driving in reverse into the big, deep hole that Fred dug, so I'm gonna need you to just um, not do that.

Alabaster Zero: Kah cluclunkle, a sinking car!

Mr. Eric: Ugh.

Alabaster Zero: With the back half of my car permanently sunk into Eric's yard, we decided to get Sprite Alright's help, teleporting all the picture frames to us.

Mr. Eric: Couldn't we have done this before ruining my tiny patch of yard.

Alabaster Zero: Don't worry, Mr. Eric. We've just planted a car so more cars will grow.

Mr. Eric: That's not how cars work.

Alabaster Zero: And then you can teach me to drive using one of those.

Mr. Eric: Okay, as long as I don't get eaten next time.

Alabaster Zero: I pinky care, Mr. Eric.

Mr. Eric: I pinky know you do.

Alabaster Zero: The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Alabaster Zero: Well, Mr. Eric. Did you have a nice time in my story?

Mr. Eric: Let's just say I was very happy at the end when the story was over.

Alabaster Zero: Oh, thanks, Mr. Eric.

Mr. Eric: Now, we've got to play Lily's question for all of you.

Lily: My name is Lily and I'm from Wisconsin and my what if question is what if picture frames could eat up some of the what if characters and Fred the Dog ate them.

Lily's Parent: Thanks, Mr. Eric.

Lily: Thanks, Mr. Eric.

Alabaster Zero: Thanks for setting us up for a beautiful mystery, Lily.

Abacus: Now it is time to shout out Leo, who is writing a book about cats titled, Whiskers. It's about a cat planet.

Fred the Dog: And Leo's sister, Mabel, who loves playing with her stuff animals, including Peter the Penguin Realtor!

JF Kitty: Then there's Nadia, who's turning ten this summer.

Fred the Dog: She loves her dog, Dally, and pup Stella, playing outside, and all kinds of canines including dogs, wolves, and werewolves!

Dracomax: Dracomax here to shout out Zoey, age eight, from New Zealand. She love love loves What If World as well as her dogs, motorbike riding, reading, and dragons!

Fred the Dog: Now, I got a woof woof for Serenity from Elk Ridge, Maryland, who likes llamas, alpacas, drawing, singing, and who has a brother whose name is Damari!

Cthunkle: Finally, there is Sorin Fieldson, age seven, from Wellington, New Zealand. He loves me, Cthunkle, because as a timeless being, my birthday is every day. Sorin also loves Beyblades, Pokemon, spinning tops, and listening to What If World.

Mr. Eric: Well, thank you all so much.

I'd also like to thank Karen O'Keeffe, our co creator, Craig Martinson for our theme song, our new helper, Miss Lynn, and all you kids at home who know that our favorite activities can often help us feel better, especially after we've let out our big feelings.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme song plays.]