

Podcast: What If World

[Episode: 221: What if hot sauce turned you into a villain?](#)

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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, and today we're starting off with a question from a listener named Jonah.

Jonah: Hi, my name is Jonah. I like dogs and my what if question is what if J.F. Kat tried to drink a bottle of hot sauce and then the bottle of hot sauce tried to take over the world? Thank you.

Mr. Eric: Ooh, I would not want to drink a bottle of hot sauce. Especially one bent on world domination. And we've got one more write-in question from a patron named John. John's eleven years old and asks, what if Fred the Dog accidentally turned fairly evil and the giant squid-o-pus was good? Ooh, we might have a visit from Cthunkle later on.

Let's find out what if J.F. Kat tried to drink a bottle of hot sauce and then the bottle of hot sauce tried to take over the world, and what if Fred the Dog accidentally turned fairly evil.

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: J.F. Kat woke up one morning with a deep stretch.

JF Kitty: Morning? You think I'm the kind of cat that wakes up in the morning?

[Record scratch.]

Mr. Eric: Um, upon closer examination, Jojo Fluffy Kat had slept all the way into the late afternoon. Again.

Fred the Dog: Jojo, Jojo, where are you? You're nine hours late for our play date. I'm almost about to leave after a few more hours of chewing on this yummy building-shaped stick.

Mr. Eric: It was Fred the Dog, J.F. Kat's best friend and former president of What If World.

JF Kitty: Hey. Now, I was president before him. Why wasn't that worth narrating?

Mr. Eric: Of course, yes. Jojo had also been president.

Abacus: Fred the Dog, if you don't stop chewing on the Observatorium, so help me!

Mr. Eric: It was Abacus P. Grumbler, wizard ext–

Fred the Dog: Help you with what?

Abacus: What?

Fred the Dog: That's what I'm asking you!

Abacus: Why?

Fred the Dog: Because you asked me for help!

Abacus: I did?

Fred the Dog: Didn't you?

Abacus: Well, now that you mention it, I do have this accursed hot sauce I need to get rid of.

JF Kitty: Hey, this story is supposed to be about meow! It's like no meowter what I do, everyone else gets all the attention!

Abacus: But you're sleeping on my windowsill.

JF Kitty: Oh, so meow windowsills belong to people.

Fred the Dog: Jojo, you're angry and it's important to be honest about your feelings.

Mr. Eric: Said Fred the Dog. His voice sometimes sounded a little different because his tongue was too long for his mouth and that gave him slightly different speech patterns than what we're used to hearing.

JF Kitty: Of course I'm angry! This is a story about me and he's narrating about your tongue!

Mr. Eric: Abacus, the wizard, was leaning out the window of the Observatory, where J.F. Kat sat. And a few feet away, under the window, Fred the Dog, finally stopped chewing on the side of the building.

Abacus: You feel underappreciated, my friend. You see, each of us is always thinking and feeling and living all at once. And sometimes that means we just really don't see each other as clearly as we should.

JF Kitty: Save your purreaching for your students, Abacus. Now give me that hot sauce.

Abacus: What for?

Fred the Dog: Yeah, didn't you hear it was a car seat?

Abacus: Acursed.

Fred the Dog: That's even worse! Can you imagine eating a cursed car seat covered in hot sauce?

Abacus: No, it's just a bottle of hot sauce that was somehow afflicted with a magical curse by someone who was just trying to get the cap off to pour it on my tacos.

Fred the Dog: You mean you didn't have salsa verde? Salsa roja?

Abacus: Not even salsa dancing.

JF Kitty: Oh, for meowing out loud!

Mr. Eric: And J.F. Kat swiped the hot sauce from Abacus's hand, easily took off the cap.

Abacus: Must have had one of those wizard-proof seals.

Mr. Eric: And started drinking the hot sauce straight from the bottle.

Fred the Dog: Jojo, stop! It's too spicy.

Abacus: And also cursed.

JF Kitty: I don't care! I feel bad and I just want to keep feeling baaaaaaa...ow.

Mr. Eric: J.F. Kat's mouth was on fire... literally! And believe it or not, breathing fire wasn't very comfortable for an already upset kitty.

JF Kitty: Aaah! Who even buys hot sauce this hot?

Abacus: I heard it held the ghost of a thousand peppers.

Fred the Dog: The fools! If only they'd made it with 999 peppers, Jojo wouldn't be breathing fire!

Abacus: I'm not so sure about that.

JF Kitty: Quiet, all of you!

Mr. Eric: Shouted J.F. Kat, the fire from his mouth finally starting to die down.

Abacus: If silence and space is what you need right now, you have but to ask. We're your friends. We can respect that.

JF Kitty: No! Shh. Did you hear that?

[Record scratch.]

Saucia: Hello? Hello? Will someone please pick me up?

Mr. Eric: It was the bottle of hot sauce. The letters on the bottle had rearranged themselves into a working face and she looked up at them from the grass below the windowsill.

JF Kitty: Pick yourself up, bottle. You can't count on anyone in this life.

Fred the Dog: Oh hi, there, hot sauce bottle. I'm Fred. Sorry about my kitty friend. He's a bit grumpy right now, but he's usually very nice.

JF Kitty: I'm not grumpy!

Saucia: Hello Fred. Hello Not Grumpy. I'm Saucia, Baroness of Spiciness.

Abacus: And I'm Abacus P. Grumbler-

JF Kitty: Well, don't think you're all important just because you got a title like Baroness. I used to be president, but look at me now. Can't even take a nap on a wizard's windowsill without getting an earful.

Abacus: You also ate my Scotch tape and coughed it up into my slippers.

JF Kitty: See? I get nothing but grief from my so-called friends. I'm gonna do you a favor and roll you far away from these people.

Mr. Eric: And J.F. Kat pushed the little bottle away. It gently rolled down the hillside.

Saucia: Oh no!

Mr. Eric: Toward the shores of Squid Lake.

Fred the Dog: Jojo Fluffy Kat, you should be ashamed of yourself!

JF Kitty: Purrobably.

Fred the Dog: She was asking for help and you did the opposite! Imagine how powerless she must feel.

JF Kitty: Now hang on a minute.

Fred the Dog: No, I got to go find her! What if she falls into the lake?

JF Kitty: Meow I don't think—

Abacus: Indeed, Jojo. You did not think. Having a bad day does not entitle you to be cruel. Now, if you'll kindly remove yourself from my windowsill, I've got some slippers that need some airing out. Harrumph.

Mr. Eric: J.F. Kat jumped down from the window and slinked away from the Observatorium and towards Squid Lake, crouching ashamedly in the grass. He had made himself feel worse and worse until he had done something inexcus—

JF Kitty: Hey! I don't need to be reminded of it, Mr. Eric.

Mr. Eric: I'm sorry, Jojo, but our mistakes don't just go away because we ignore them—

JF Kitty: [Meows something similar to the Meow Mix jingle.]

Mr. Eric: It was at that moment that J.F. Kat spied Fred the Dog standing at the edge of Squid Lake, a wet bottle of hot sauce held in his curly tongue.

JF Kitty: I see what you're doing, Mr. Eric, but none of this is my fault.

Fred the Dog: Thank you, Saucia, for freeing me from the shackles of thoughtfulness. Let us take over the world together.

Mr. Eric: From his hiding place in the tall grass, J.F. Kat could see a drop of hot sauce had slid down the bottle onto Fred's tongue.

JF Kitty: See, she was evil the whole time so I didn't do anything wrong.

Saucia: Did you hear that?

Fred the Dog: Lady, I'm an old dog. I can only hear nearby shouting or kibble getting scooped into a bowl from a hundred yards away.

Saucia: From the bushes, it sounded like a stage whisper.

JF Kitty: Oh no, she hears me.

Fred the Dog: You mean like when someone speaks with a cadence and quality of a whisper but they clearly still want to be heard?

Saucia: Yes. We've got to stop them. What if they overheard my plan to take over the world?

Fred the Dog: What plan was that?

Saucia: Remember how I just finished describing the one subtle flaw in my otherwise perfect plan right before I heard that whisper?

Fred the Dog: Uh, really?

Saucia: Should I just repeat the whole thing?

JF Kitty: Yes, you should.

Saucia: See, there it is again!

Fred the Dog: Listen, if you're worried about people other than me listening to you, you should just send your swarm of enchanted hot sauce squid people after them.

JF Kitty: No... you shouldn't.

Saucia: I can't believe you're not hearing this, Fred. And look, those bushes are rustling every time he speaks. Why does talking even cause a bush to rustle?

Mr. Eric: And Saucia did send her army of acursed squid people who had fallen under the spell of her hot sauce when she'd rolled into Squid Lake because someone had refused to help her.

JF Kitty: Meow, I get it, Mr. Eric!

Mr. Eric: Finally.

JF Kitty: Her hot sauce powers turn you opposite. That's why I've been so much less charming than usual. It has nothing to do with the frustrations and disappointments of life kind of piling up until I felt a general grumpiness.

Saucia: Actually, I had not figured out how to use my powers until after you took off my cap and flung me down the hill. Now I know that I can only rely on people who I've turned evil with my hot sauce. Oh, it makes me feel so powerful.

JF Kitty: But feeling powerful at someone else's expense is wrong! Having a bunch of evil enchanted servants won't make you happy!

Fred the Dog: To be fair, she only turned me fairly evil, but I'm gonna do so many shenanigans.

JF Kitty: I'm really not interested.

Fred the Dog: And I'm gonna make people's socks so warm that they have to take them off and then they can't decide whether to go barefoot or just wear shoes without socks and get sweaty stink foot.

JF Kitty: Yeah, uh, that's great, but...

Fred the Dog: Then they'll overcook scrambled eggs and cut them into dry little egg balls and be offended when you ask for ketchup.

JF Kitty: I mean, some people are weird about eggs.

Fred the Dog: And finally, I'll do a third thing sillier than the first two things, but also following the pattern of only being fairly evil.

JF Kitty: Obviously.

Mr. Eric: The squid people were marching across the world. Scuttling, really, but it still looked intimidating.

Saucia: Soon they will come face to face with all the people of What If World and with but a dab of my hot sauce, they will be forever changed.

Mr. Eric: J.F. Kat wanted to stop them but he was just one cat and he was worried if he gave up his hiding place, they'd be able to—

Saucia: It's really not a hiding place anymore. We've been having a conversation with him.

JF Kitty: Meow she tells me.

Mr. Eric: And J.F. Kat darted from the bush as the enchanted squid people scrambled right over to it carrying Saucia, the Baroness of Spiciness away toward her destiny.

JF Kitty: I'm pretty sure I didn't handle that well.

Cthunkle: Are you kidding? That was a classic villainess blunder. You'll fit right in with us evildoers.

JF Kitty: No, no, I'm an evil undoer! It's kind of my thing.

Mr. Eric: J.F. Kat was talking to Cthunkle, a colossal squid-o-pus, or a horror beyond imagining, depending on which side of the bed he woke up on.

Cthunkle: But you made the typical mistake of tyrants. You taught someone to believe that power is the only thing that matters and then they became more powerful than you.

JF Kitty: Hey, you're swimming in the lake. Why weren't you turned evil by the hot sauce?

Cthunkle: Because I'm old enough to understand that there is no switch you can flip to become bad. Our experiences and decisions shape us every day.

JF Kitty: Then you're immune to hot sauce because of magic?

Cthunkle: [Sighs] But Jojo, that little bottle of hot sauce doesn't have many experiences to draw upon. Just a memory of you tossing her into a lake.

JF Kitty: But it was just a nudge!

Cthunkle: The outcome was the same.

JF Kitty: Are you just here to make me feel worse or are you going to help.

Cthunkle: Yes.

Mr. Eric: And the squid-o-pus climbed up out of Squid Lake and stood, dripping with slimy water.

Cthunkle: Now, have you suffered shame? Are you ready to make an unequivocal apology, even if you are not forgiven? Will you allow me to wear you as a cute little hat for a week?

JF Kitty: Is all of that really necessary?

Cthunkle: Everything except the bit about the hat.

JF Kitty: I'll do it anyway!

Mr. Eric: And J.F. Kat climbed upon Cthunkle's head and rode him all the way to the Observatorium.

Abacus: Help! Help! Someone made my socks too warm and now I don't know what to do with my feet!

Cthunkle: Don't you have slippers?

JF Kitty: No!

Abacus: No!

Mr. Eric: And there was Saucia and her army of squid people climbing all over the towers of the Observatorium.

Saucia: I've done it! I've conquered the entire world, mua hahaha!

JF Kitty: Uh... um...

Fred the Dog: No, just don't ruin this for her. She doesn't realize that the world is more than just that lake and this hill.

JF Kitty: Saucia, Baroness of Spiciness. I had a moment of thoughtlessness and I did something inexcusable. I swatted you away like a crystal ball when I should have been treating you like a crystal person.

Abacus: I'd like to point out that swatting my crystal balls isn't very nice, either, Jojo.

Cthunkle: [Clears throat] Baby steps, Abacus.

JF Kitty: I'm so sorry, Saucia. Oh, also I still have your bottle cap in my cute little fluffy paw. I thought you might want it.

Saucia: Ooh, that's where it was. Could you please screw it back on my head?

JF Kitty: Meow, of course.

Cthunkle: That was kind of a forced “meow.”

JF Kitty: Are you here to criticize me or wear me as a hat?

Cthunkle: Yes.

Mr. Eric: And Cthunkle stretched down his strange form toward the ground so J.F. Kat could gently replace the bottle cap atop Saucia’s head.

Saucia: Oh, much better.

JF Kitty: Then you’ll forgive me.

Saucia: No, but I don’t feel like ruling the world anymore.

JF Kitty: Ah ha! It must have been a cap of evil undoing. I did it. I saved the world.

Cthunkle: No, you can’t undo tyranny by occasionally taking responsibility for your actions.

Abacus: Abuhbuhbuh! Baby steps, Cthunkle.

Cthunkle: But he let his feelings control his decisions and endangered–

JF Kitty: Says the squid-o-pus who tries to take over the world every month.

Cthunkle: Oh, right. So is that the lesson? We’re all terrible?

Saucia: Or is it that we all can become better.

Fred the Dog: Who wants scrambled eggs, heh heh heh.

Abacus: Oh, those look terribly dry. Please pass the ketchup.

Fred the Dog: Never!

JF Kitty: Now we’ve done it. Fred’s still evil.

Cthunkle: Fairly evil, certainly.

Abacus: Is there enough time left in the story to–
[Falling harp scale.]

Abacus: I guess not.

Mr. Eric: Well, John and Jonah, I hope you enjoyed your story.

JF Kitty: It's J.F. Kat. I'm back to give a shout out to Layla, who's eight years old. She and her sister Hannah live in Mountain View, California with their two guinea pigs. Layla loves playing badminton and listening to German audio books of which there are many. And she loves terrorizing her parents with her best J.F. Kat imitation.

Randall Radbot: Randall Radbot here to give a rad shout out to Alex Nyjafov. He's turning six on October 16th. He has a beep boop baby brother named Adam. Alex loves Sonic and will have a Sonic-themed birthday. They live in Alpine, New Jersey.

JF Kitty: Now it's me again, hahahaha! To shout out Merlin who's six years old from Bedford, England. That's Merlin with an R, in case you didn't hear me!

Fair Elise: And finally we have Quinn and Zoey, who live in Alameda, California. Thank you, as well.

Mr. Eric: I'd like to thank Karen O'Keeffe, my co-creator, Craig Martinson for our theme song, my helper, Miss Lynn, and all you kids at home who try to empower others rather than make them feel powerless.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme song plays.]