

Podcast: What If World

[Episode: 230: What if Abacus turned into an abacus? \(Storyport Part 1\)](#)

File Length: 00:18:33

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 write-in question from a listener named Maria. Maria is now 10 years old and she asks, "What if Abacus turned into an abacus while trying to teach maths?"

I love that question! And where Miss Karen went to school, they called it maths, with an S, which is different from where I grew up, and they just called it math without an S.

Now, we've also got a write-in from a patron named Josh, who asks, "What if Abacus accidentally sends himself, Fair Elise, and Fred the Dog back in time to some of the past What If World episodes?"

I'm so excited to revisit some of my favorite stories and also have a new story come into being.

And we've got a third question from a patron named Hubert.

Hubert: Hello, my name is Hubert. And my what if question is what if Dracomax had a long-lost twin that was evil and tried taking over the world the same time as Cthunkle. Bye! Thanks! Love your podcast.

Mr. Eric: Oh, we are swimming in questions today. So let's get straight into our story and find out what if Abacus turned into an abacus and went back in time with Fair Elise and Fred the Dog, and what if Dracomax had an evil twin?

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Abacus P. Grumbler had just put on his list singed and patched-up robe because today was an important day.

Abacus: I get to teach my first maths class! Hoo hoo hoo! I like saying it with the extra S. It makes me feel fancy.

Fred the Dog: Who are you talking to, Abacus?

Abacus: I was just talking aloud to myself. Don't you ever narrate your life?

Fred the Dog: Not when I'm chewing on a stick.

Abacus: Wait a second... Fred the Dog, why am I hearing your voice on the other side of the door into my office? And why does it sound like you're chewing on a wand?

Fred the Dog: Nothing!

Abacus: Nothing indeed!

Mr. Eric: Abacus burst into his classroom and there was Fred the Dog, chewing on the wizard's very last wand.

Abacus: Fred, you get that out of your mouth!

Fred the Dog: [Chewing] It wasn't me, I promise!

Abacus: But you're still chewing on it! Give me that!

Fred the Dog: I'm almost done not chewing on it!

Abacus: Just because you're missing teeth doesn't mean you can't chew!

Mr. Eric: The wand blinked out of existence and as for Abacus...

Abacus: Fred, did you just get bigger or did I just get smaller?

Fred the Dog: I don't know, but I feel a lot bigger now that you're just a little abacus.

Abacus: Oh, did I turn into a child? [Clicking noises]

Fred the Dog: No, you turned into a little abacus.

Abacus: So I'm just miniaturized. Why can I not look at myself.

Fred the Dog: Because you don't have eyes because you're a little abacus.

Abacus: No, I had eyes when I was little. You're really confusing me.

Fred the Dog: I don't know how else I can explain this to you.

Abacus: It really doesn't help when you just use the same words again.

Fred the Dog: Ooh, okay, okay, so you know how before you were a big Abacus.

Abacus: Yes...

Fred the Dog: Well, now you're little. And an abacus.

Abacus: [Sighs] Well, little Abacus or big, I just need my wand and I can set this all straight.

Fred the Dog: I don't know where the wand went. Someone must have run off with it other than me. Because I did not do any of this.

Abacus: Then I'm going to need to pair with another magical being in order to channel any of my spells. Oh dear.

Fred the Dog: I know! We'll just go see Fair Elise.

Abacus: Oh, but she's president now. Should we really be bothering her with such trivial problems?

[Door bell]

Fred the Dog: Fair Elise, it's me, Freddy. Somehow I got on top of this cloud and I'm ringing your doorbell even though you live in a thimble and it doesn't have an apparent doorbell.

Fair Elise: Hello, Fred. To what do I owe this interruption?

Fred the Dog: Oh no, it's really important. You see, Abacus was going to teach maths but then he accidentally got turned into a little abacus.

Fair Elise: You mean like the counting machine?

Fred the Dog: Yeah, exactly. See, you get it.

Fair Elise: Well, teaching math to our students is very important so I will help. Just tell me exactly what happened.

Fred the Dog: Oh, well, you know, it's like, there was this evil Freddy and he was chewing on the stick, but it wasn't a stick, it was a wand. But it just tasted so good... to my evil twin, Fred Evil. You know, from episode 124.

Fair Elise: Fred Evil is on the run again? I thought we stopped him.

Abacus: [Very muffled] I can explain it if you just take me out of this bindle.

Fair Elise: By bindle, do you mean the sack slung over your shoulder that's actually just your own tongue wrapped around something several times?

Fred the Dog: Yeah, what do you think a bindle is?

Mr. Eric: And Fred the Dog unraveled his extra-long tongue, the extra-long tongue that gave his voice its unique sound and...

Abacus: Why didn't you just tell me I'd turned into an adding machine?

Fred the Dog: I did like, so many times.

Fair Elise: But Sprite Alright is sick today and I don't have her skill with teleportation, so I cannot just conveniently teleport us right in front of this Fred Evil.

Abacus: Fred Evil?

Fred the Dog: Yeah, like I was saying... my evil twin who was chewing a stick.

Abacus: I could have sworn that was you.

Fred the Dog: Getting turned into an abacus must have really messed with your mind. That was obviously Fred Evil. We've got to stop him.

Abacus: All right. I'm afraid we must recover my wand.

Fair Elise: Shouldn't I turn you back into a wizard, first?

Abacus: Without my wand, you could accidentally turn me from an abacus into a super computer bent on world domination, or even into a slightly smaller abacus.

[Sting!]

Fair Elise: Just seems a little you kn-

Abacus: Fred, Fair Elise, take my hand!

Fred the Dog: But you don't have a hand.

Abacus: And neither do you, just grab onto some part of me.

Fred the Dog: Okay.

Abacus: Ooh hoo hoo! Not there.

Fred the Dog: Sorry.

Abacus: Focus your magic on Fred Evil, Fair Elise.

Fair Elise: Oh, well, you have done more teleporting than I have.

Abacus: Medieval Cerebral, we must find Fred Evil!

Fred the Dog: That doesn't sound good.

Abacus: Magic doesn't have to sound good, it just has to work!

Mr. Eric: And it did work, sort of, as they all found themselves staring down upon a familiar scene.

[Chimes]

Mr. Eric: J.F. Kat turned back around and went back outside to see that Alice had finally floated away, leaving Fred, Fair Elise, Alabaster, and Fred shivering in the... wait.

Fred the Dog: Yeah, there's two of us now.

Fred the Dog: Oh, this Fred's so good at counting all of a sudden.

JF Kitty: All right, which one of you's the real Fred?

Fred the Dog: I don't really—

Fred the Dog: [Sneeze]

Mr. Eric: Fred sneezed on Alabaster and Fair Elise and then.

Alabaster Zero: Cool, I've got a twin brother.

Alabaster Zero-2: Ooh, you've got a twin. Big whoop.

Fair Elise: Well, the two of you have very rude twins, I must say.

Fair Elise-2: But my twin's better than my twin because I'm a fair and all the things I do are better.

JF Kitty: Fred, I think your sneezes make everyone have identical twins.

Fred the Dog-2: Oh, this kitty cat is so smart.

JF Kitty: Sarcastic identical twins.

Alabaster Zero: Don't you mean, ident-evil twins?

Alabaster Zero-2: Wow, ident-evil. How long did it take you to come up with that?

Fred the Dog: Oh, J.F. Kat, I think I'm gonna have to call in sick to being president. Could you do it for a few weeks or something?

JF Kitty: You can't call in sick to being president. Let's just handle one problem at a time. I'm gonna get the three or, uh, six of you some soup.

Fred the Dog-2: Oh, yeah. And deal with all that work in there? As if.

Fair Elise: Our responsibilities don't go away just because—

Fair Elise-2: Because I'm a fairy and I've got to make everyone do the right thing all the time.

JF Kitty: Fine, I'll bring the soup out here.

Mr. Eric: And as J.F. Kat cooked up a big pot of soup, he could hear Fred continuing to sneeze outside, sending more ident-evil twins out into What If World.

Fair Elise: Oh, Abacus, we didn't teleport, we storyported.

Fred the Dog: Oh my gosh, there's two Fredmys there. Can I go talk to them?

Abacus: Oh, sure. There's a small chance it will implode the universe, but it could also explode the universe.

Fair Elise: Okay, let's not do that, then. Besides neither of them appears to have your wand anyway.

Abacus: Oh, but they just created an evil twin of Dracomax. He's very magical. I bet he could help us.

Fred the Dog: Hey, Dracevil?

Dracevil: It is me Dracevil... oh, you already knew that.

Abacus: We were wondering if you saw a chewed up wand. Fred Evil might have dropped it.

Dracevil: No, I have not seen it.

Fair Elise: Are you just being sarcastic like the other evil twins?

Dracevil: No, no, no. They only tiptoed around on the equinox of evil.

Abacus: The evilnox.

Dracevil: I'm going to go full-blown evil and take over the world. I'm picturing everyone lives on tiny flying plates which mostly just fly into my mouth. I call it the tapas-verse.

Cthunkle: But I, Cthunkle, was also planning on taking over the world.

Dracevil: We have talked about this. We have to limit the amount of episodes we are in together because our voices are very similar.

Cthunkle: I disagree. My voice is sultry and unique.

Dracevil: But you must admit that my tapas for dragons idea is superior to your plot.

Cthunkle: But you don't even know my plot.

Dracevil: Still, it is a pretty safe assumption.

Fair Elise: I was afraid of this. The longer we spend in a past story, the worst our story porting can distort the past.

Cthunkle: Why are we arguing? We should be stopping those time travelers from leaving before our timeline resets and neither one of us can take over the world.

Dracevil: Oh, fine. Let's just do your thing, Cthunkle.

Cthunkle: That's not what I'm saying.

Abacus: They'll probably go on like this for a while.

Fred the Dog: Oh, then let's get out of here. I don't want to be tapas for dragons.

Abacus: Although it does sound like a lovely restaurant idea.

Fred the Dog: Of course it is. And maybe we'll go into business when we get back to the present.

Dracevil: See, the time travelers prefer my idea.

Cthunkle: But they haven't heard mine.

Fred the Dog: Okay, we should just go find... Mr. Mouser. He was my secretary of sticks when I was president, so he probably has an extra stick wand or something.

Abacus: Then, to the Mouser-verse we must go. Take my hand!

Fair Elise: Okay, let's just be really specific about what part of an abacus is its hand this time.

Abacus: There's no time for specificity, grab hold of something—ooh, that tickles.

Dracevil: Okay, Cthunkle, tell us your idea.

Cthunkle: Well, um, it was called the sushiverse. And everyone would be wrapped in rice and...

Dracevil: Are you just stealing my idea.

Cthunkle: Yes. I admit. It's amazing.

Dracevil: Thank you.

Abacus: To the Mouser-verse we must go!

[Chimes]

Mr. Eric: President Fred flipped a floorboard under which he had hidden a cache of sticks only to find it empty.

Fred the Dog: Hmm... has someone stolen my sticks?

Mr. Eric: Then he checked his broom closet.

Fred the Dog: Oh, no, these broom handles have been chewed off, too. Secretary of sticks, I need your help.

Mr. Eric: And Mr. Mouser crawled out of a little hole in the wall of the What House.

Mr. Mouser: I thought I was going to be your Secretary of State, or perhaps your Chief of Staff.

Mr. Eric: Said Mr. Mouser, straightening his glasses and looking a little cross.

Mr. Mouser: But instead I have been in charge of sticks for over two years.



Fred the Dog: Oh, that's actually a much more important job, Mr. Mouser. And you see, someone has stolen all my sticks and even eaten my broomsticks.

Mr. Mouser: No, Fred. That was you. You chewed all the sticks in the What House and every stick that has fallen in the forest, and the trees have written a strongly worded letter asking that you stop chewing up on them.

Fred the Dog: So there's no sticks for Freddy?

Mr. Mouser: Of course, you could go out and buy some sticks.

Fred the Dog: Wait, you can buy sticks?

Mr. Mouser: Well, you can't because you spent all of your salary repairing the damages you've done to What If World since becoming president.

Fred the Dog: So money can buy sticks.

Mr. Mouser: Yes, of course, but maybe you should just give up sticks for a little wh—

Fred the Dog: Mr. Mouser, don't even bother finishing that sentence. Past Fred has already left. He's not going to learn his lesson so quickly.

Mr. Mouser: What do you mean, Past Fred?

Abacus: It's all right. Just tell him we're from the future. There's only a minute to very good chance that it'll drive him insane.

Mr. Mouser: What?

Fair Elise: Mr. Mouser, have you seen a chewed-up wand sort of resembling a stick. Possibly sparking with magic, or...

Fred the Dog: Or like the drool on it has come to life and now the drool is wielding the wand and making everyone else's drool come alive. That'd be cool.

Mr. Mouser: No, nothing like that. But I have seen the universe starting to unravel at the seams just a bit, ever since you three appeared. Is that important?

Abacus: It's just the cumulative consequences of time travel slowly trying to catch up with us and erase our paradoxical nature from existence. Nothing to worry about, unless, of course, we have to time travel more.

Fair Elise: We need to be more organized with this. Let's make a spreadsheet of all the past episodes in which Abacus appeared.

Abacus: But my wands almost always get destroyed.

Fred the Dog: Abacus, it's the best idea we've got. Only, what's a spreadsheet?

Fair Elise: Oh, we've been over this, Fred.

Abacus: Yes, I seem to remember a time when we had a very similar interaction.

Fair Elise: No, Abacus, be careful! You're imagining us into the past again.

Abacus: I'm sorry, my imagination is too powerful!

Fair Elise: Into the past again...

Abacus: Well, I'm sorry. I was busy making my famous chocolate cookie ice cream casserole.

Dracomax: Abacus, how could you? I have spent all day making this chocolate candy bar casserole.

Abacus: Dracomax, we are dealing with real problems here. We cannot worry about how many different kinds of chocolate casseroles we have!

Fred the Dog: Did somebody say chocolate stick casserole, because that's what I brought.

Abacus: Petey, you said you would handle the potluck spreadsheet.

Petey the Pirate: And I did. I brought a sheet to spread out on top of the cloud here. Which I'm now realizing, you meant like a worksheet to organize who was bringing what to the potluck.

Fred the Dog: Oh yeah, I remember. A spreadsheet's just smaller than a sheet and less comfortable to roll around in and chew your paws on.

Fair Elise: All right. All of us think about all of Abacus's past stories and I will magic us a spreadsheet into existence so we don't have to stay here a moment longer than necessary.

[Magical crackling and fizzing noises.]

Abacus: That did not sound good.

Fred the Dog: I thought magic didn't have to sound good as long as it works?

Abacus: No, but that sounded like magic not working.

Fair Elise: Oh, it worked all right. We have a beautiful magical spreadsheet. The only problem is, now I'm out of magic and we're stuck here in the past.

Abacus: Oh, yes, that is quite a problem. If only someone out there could end this story before we get ourselves into any more trouble.

Fred the Dog: Yeah, but then in the next story we're still gonna be in trouble.

Abacus: That's a problem for future Abacus, Fred, and Fair Elise.

Fair Elise: That's still going to be us.

Fred the Dog: Oh, yeah...

Abacus: I know...

Mr. Eric: The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Well, Hugo, Josh, Maria, and all our listeners, I hope you enjoyed the first half of your story. We've got even more questions to add on next week when future Fred, Abacus, and Fair Elise can hopefully get out of this mess.

Potty: It's me, Potty the Pirate, here with a big pot of stew for my friend, Zara. Zara is six and a half years old. She loves to draw, to swing, to craft, and to play with her aunt Tia.

Mr. Eric: Thank you, Zara, that stew smells delicious.

Potty: Of course it does.

Mr. Eric: And I'd like to thank Karen O'Keeffe, our co-creator, Miss Lynn, our associate producer, who helped a ton with this episode, Craig Martinson for our theme song, and all you kids at home who know it's better to fess up to our mistakes sooner rather than later. Especially when you're stuck traveling in time.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme song plays.]