

Podcast: What If World

[Episode: 210: What if a city sank in squid ink? \(Cthoffee Shop Plot Part 2\)](#)

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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 finishing up a two-part Cthunkle-based story inspired by your questions.

Speaking of which, we've got to read Emmy Chung's question before we hop back into the story. She wrote: what if Cthunkle sunk New What City with his ink?

And if you remember our story from last time, it started in the present with Cthunkle opening his brand new coffee shop, The Cthoffee Shop. But Detective Alabaster Zero did not quite trust that squid-o-pus. Then, we saw a flashback to when Cthunkle was trying to take over New What City! He'd set up towering buildings filled with his ink that he was selling as coffee. He had planned to flood and sink New What City by letting loose all of this stored-up ink when the next big storm hit. But things didn't go according to plan. The big storm they were expecting came weeks early along with a little baby squid that you might know as Scully the Squid.

Cthunkle decided to take care of this baby squid by showing him how to be an evil mastermind who conquers a city! But as the flood waters grew and Cthunkle released his ink to sink the city... well. Why don't we get into the story to find out the rest.

So, let's find out what happened to Scully and Cthunkle ten years ago and why Cthunkle is now opening another tiny coffee shop today.

[Rising harp scale.]

It was ten years ago and Cthunkle clung to the top of his tower in the middle of New What City. But he was also in the middle of a hurricane! His other Squidbuck towers spread all over New What City had already toppled, releasing their ink and that ink water combined with the flood water as New What City started to sink even as it flooded with inky, black water!

Baby Scully: [Crying]

Mr. Eric: Cthunkle heard a distant cry and then a kerplunk! He'd taken baby Scully out into the storm with him and it sounded like the little squid had just splashed into the stormy, inky, black flood waters that had risen nearly to the top of Cthunkle's tower.

Cthunkle: Scullen?

Mr. Eric: Cthunkle reached into the water with his every squirmy appendage. Then he saw Squidarella launch herself into the floodwaters with an even bigger splash.

Cthunkle: Squidarella! I command you to save Scullen!

Squidarella: What do you think I'm trying to do here? Why don't you help me!

Cthunkle: H...elp?

Squidarella: Yeah, it's when you do something for someone else, Cthunkle, even though they may not be offering you anything in return!

Cthunkle: Sounds like a waste of time to me.

Mr. Eric: But Cthunkle heard Scully's distant cry. Trees and debris, and even a few Duck Boats had risen up with the flooding water and the sinking city. And even though Scullen could breathe water, there was enough big, heavy flotsam and jetsam swirling around that it was not a safe place for a baby squid.

Cthunkle: Squidarella? What do I do? I don't know how to help another.

Squidarella: Don't you have, like, super powers?

Cthunkle: Actually, my magic is rather ill-defined. It's part of my mystique.

Squidarella: Just do something about this water so we can find Scullen.

Cthunkle: But it's working, Squidarella! Soon everyone will be a squid-o-pus, whose mind I can control!

Mr. Eric: And even as he spoke, a number of New-What-ers could be seen swimming around their sinking city, their skin slowly turning green, their arms and legs slowly sprouting suction cups!

Cthunkle: Actually, Mr. Eric, I'm not always green. Like most octopuses, I can change my color. And also, how many tentacles I have.

Mr. Eric: No, an octopus can regrow a damaged limb. They can't have more than eight tentacles.

Cthunkle: Really? Oh, such a sad existence.

Squidarella: Uh, hello? Imminent danger, here.

Cthunkle: Ugh. Fine. I suppose the city is sunken enough.

Mr. Eric: Cthunkle wove his tentacles in a strange and entrancing pattern. A flash of light ripped across the sky like horizontal lightning. Then it began to spread apart to reveal a vision of an even stormier sky!

Squidarella: Oh, great. A double hurricane.

Cthunkle: No, no no. I'm sending the hurricane to Jupiter. It's already a gas giant. One more little super storm won't make much difference.

Squidarella: I'm not sure that's astronomically accurate.

Mr. Eric: But it was too late! The hurricane had already been sucked through that crack in the sky, which closed up like an invisible zipper across all of creation.

Squidarella: Ugh. Can you stop messing with the fabric of reality? I'm trying to focus, here.

Cthunkle: Scullen! Scullen, I made the hurricane disappear! Where are you?

Baby Scully: [Crying]

Squidarella: It's not enough, Cthunkle. The inky waters are too dark.

Cthunkle: And the water is still too choppy. He could get hurt. Scullen!

Squidarella: Cthunkle, you know what you have to do.

Cthunkle: No. I cannot.

Squidarella: It's either your evil scheme or that baby squid.

Cthunkle: Oh, but my evil scheme's going so well! Even the inanimate objects are turning into squid-o-puses.

Mr. Eric: And a large building seemed to be opening and closing its many windows as if it were blinking eyes, and started stretching out long, concrete tentacles that swayed to and fro!

Cthunkle: It's so beautiful.

Squidarella: It's so dangerous for a child!

Cthunkle: [Crying] No fair!

Mr. Eric: Cthunkle still searched through the waters with his many appendages.

Tentacle: Cthunkle, we really can't find him, buddy. Most of your tentacles don't have eyes.

Mr. Eric: Said Talking Tentacle, who only had a mouth.

Cthunkle: I cannot make up my mind. I think I'll just flash forward to a time after I've already made this decision.

Mr. Eric: Oh, Cthunkle, that's cheating!

Cthunkle: Not for a timeless being.

Mr. Eric: No, no we cannot flash until you've made a decision.

Cthunkle: Then I know exactly what I must do.

Mr. Eric: Do you? Do you really?

Cthunkle: Yes, and I'm going to dive into the water dramatically and you can flash forward to a similar splashing sound in my future, thus making for a smooth transition.

Mr. Eric: Yeah, it's not a very smooth transition if you announce it first.

Cthunkle: Kersplash a plunk!

Mr. Eric: Said Cthunkle, diving into the water.

[Flashback ending noise.]

Mr. Eric: And indeed, Alabaster had spilled his coffee while Cthunkle, in a flagrant abuse of the flashback rules had avoided making a critical decision.

Alabaster Zero: Oops! Clumsy-wumsy!

Mr. Eric: Said Alabaster Zero.

Alabaster Zero: I accidentally splashed my coffee all over behind the barista station where customers aren't allowed. Let me just clean it up for you.

Cthunkle: Sit down, Alabaster. I will get you a fresh coffee.

Alabaster Zero: Oh, but I wanted to look for clues to your evil scheme.

Cthunkle: [Sighs] I know I have wronged you and many others in the past, but I assure you there is no evil scheme here.

Alabaster Zero: Then why is this place filled with more alien monsters than the Star Wars cantina?

[Alien / monster noises.]

Cthunkle: Perhaps they feel comforted by the presence of other alien monsters who don't judge them by their appearance.

[More alien / monster noises.]

Alabaster Zero: Yeah, okay, I apologize to all of your customers and I will take my refill on that coffee.

Cthunkle: How do you have it.

Alabaster Zero: I take it black. But then I add eight ounces of cream and fourteen sugars.

[Bell tinkles.]

Mr. Eric: The little bell at the large doors rang again and an older Squidarella scuttled in alongside Scully, a proper tween of a squid who seemed just a little unsure of himself as he briefly held his mother's tentacle in his.

Cthunkle: Ah, if it isn't my two favorite customers.

Squidarella: It's your opening day, Cthunkle.

Scully: Ah, Mom, go easy on him.

Mr. Eric: Said Scully, quickly letting go of his mother's tentacle as he saw Cthunkle.

Scully: So do you serve any plankton soda here, Cthunkle?

Cthunkle: You're letting him drink soda?

Squidarella: Ugh, you know, maybe we should just get you to school a little early.

Mr. Eric: Said Squidarella.

Alabaster Zero: Cthunkle, don't tell a parent how to parent. Even I know that.

Cthunkle: I'm sorry, 'Rella. I don't have soda but I do make a mean fish-head smoothie.

Squidarella: You know those have the same amount of sugar as soda.

Cthunkle: But with extra protein and fishy oils.

Scully: Hey, I'm right here. I'll just have a decaf oatmilk latte with one pump of simple syrup.

Cthunkle: Huh, it's like I don't even know him anymore.

Squidarella: That's because you don't, Cthunkle.

[Flashback entry noise!]

Mr. Eric: It was ten years ago and Cthunkle was hovering over Squidarella and baby Scully. The hurricane had passed and the floods had subsided but the little baby squid still didn't look so good.

Cthunkle: Will he be okay, Squidarella?

Squidarella: Yes. No thanks to you.

Cthunkle: What? No thanks to me? I opened a portal to a desert dimension, draining all of the flood water and saving New What City, nevermind this brat!

Squidarella: It was a very dramatic decision you made.

Cthunkle: I know. One worthy of narration. Anyone who missed our dramatic saving of Scully the Squid and all of New What City is surely kicking themselves.

Mr. Eric: Wow. You two are giving me a lot to work with right now.

Squidarella: Sorry, Mr. Eric. But this isn't about you.

Cthunkle: Thank you, Squidarella.

Squidarella: Or you, Cthunkle! This is about the baby squid who you endangered.

Cthunkle: I mean, of course I did, but you're my general. You're supposed to sign off on this stuff.

Squidarella: Not anymore.

Cthunkle: How dare my general speak to me this way.

Squidarella: No, I thought it was understood that that was me quitting. I don't want to be your general anymore.

Cthunkle: Oh. Oh, that's much worse. Well, Scully, looks like it'll be just you and me scheming from now on.

Baby Scully: [Blech!]

Mr. Eric: Squidarella gently picked the frail squid up off the wet street and held him tight.

Squidarella: I'll take care of him while I try to locate his parents.

Cthunkle: He doesn't need parents, he has us! My ink is what made you both amphibious, able to breathe both air and water! Stick with me and you'll become all powerful.

Squidarella: Kids don't need their parents to be all-powerful, Cthunkle.

Cthunkle: Oh, then what do they need?

Squidarella: Well, I'm not exactly sure, but I know I'm better suited to figure it out than you.

Cthunkle: But I'm—

Squidarella: Come talk to me when you're ready to act like a grown up, Cthunkle.

Mr. Eric: And with that, Squidarella headed off into the distance as little Scully climbed up onto her head.

Cthunkle: But I'm... but I'm...

Alabaster Zero: Under arrest!

Mr. Eric: Said a young Alabaster Zero.

Cthunkle: What are you, in high school? Leave me alone.

Alabaster Zero: No. I'm making a citizen's arrest.

Cthunkle: On what grounds?

Alabaster Zero: On the grounds that you're an evil monster who's presumably responsible for all this destruction.

Cthunkle: Sorry. I'm fantastically wealthy with an army of lawyers. I don't really get in trouble for stuff like this.

Alabaster Zero: Well, someday I'm gonna change that when I'm the world's greatest detective. You see, it all started with my dad, Alabaster Negative One, who wasn't really that great of a detective. But he taught me everything he knew and someday I'll probably have to unlearn all of that. But until then—

Cthunkle: Oh, end flashback.

Alabaster Zero: What are you talking about? This was about to be my flashback? Hey, wait, why is the world getting all wiggly right now? I had such a cool backstory to share! Ugh.

Mr. Eric: Back at the Cthoffee Shop, Scully was enjoying his decaf oatmilk latte with one pump of simple syrup and Squidarella was investigating the café with every bit as much scrutiny as Alabaster Zero had mustered.

Alabaster Zero: Did you find anything, Squidarella?

Squidarella: No. I mean, there's plenty of slime and monsters and magic.

Alabaster Zero: Yeah, but noone's getting hurt or mind controlled or transformed against their will. I just don't get it.

Mr. Eric: As Alabaster and Squidarella tried to unravel a sinister plot that didn't seem to be raveled anywhere, Cthunkle approached Scully the Squid, seeming nervous.

Cthunkle: Hello, Scullen.s

Scully: Hey, Cthunkle.

Cthunkle: How's the latte?

Scully: Pretty good, actually.

Cthunkle: Of course it is. The beans are from the slopes of the deadliest volcano, harvested by evil bat monkeys.

Scully: Oh, what makes them evil?

Cthunkle: Well, they charge me a tentacle and another tentacle.

Scully: That's nice. You paid them a fair wage.

Cthunkle: Fair... nice... ugh. What have I become?

Scully: I don't know, but it's the first time Squidarella's taken me to see you in a while.

Cthunkle: So it is, young Scullen.

Scully: Hey, I'm not that young anymore.

Cthunkle: Indeed you are not. But perhaps you are still young enough to enjoy some juggling?

Scully: No way. You can't juggle. I've seen you try. You're terrible.

Mr. Eric: And Cthunkle picked up eight coffee mugs.

Cthunkle: Well, I've had a lot of time to get less terrible.

Mr. Eric: Said the massive squid-o-pus, starting to juggle the mugs deftly.

Alabaster Zero: Well, would you look at that.

Mr. Eric: Said Alabaster Zero.

Squidarella: Not bad.

Mr. Eric: Said Squidarella. And everyone within the Cthoffee Shop slowly turned to watch Cthunkle as he started juggling even more coffee mugs.

Cthunkle: You know, Scullen. It's even more fun to watch from atop my head.

Scully: Oh, can I, Mom?

Squidarella: If you want to.

Mr. Eric: And the not-so-little squid climbed atop Cthunkle's head as he once had long-ag-

Cthunkle: Oh, actually, I can't see now. [Crashing]

Scully: [Laughing]

Cthunkle: No, you're really throwing me off [crashing].

Scully: [Laughs]

Cthunkle: Don't laugh at me. I've been practicing this for three eternities!

Scully: [Laughs]

Mr. Eric: The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Well, Emmy and Callen, I hope you enjoyed your story. Thanks to all of our listeners and all of our questioners. Whether or not I've answered your question on the show, you are helping build your imagination and make this imaginary world even bigger.

Fred the Dog: Fred the Dog here to shout out Frankie! His favorite character is Hungry Bungry and he loves to listen to What If World with his sister, Margo. She loves J.F. Kat. And when they aren't listening to the show, they are imagining that they are the characters in What If World!

JF Kitty: Margo, I bet you make an excellent J.F. Kat.

Hungry Bungry: And Frankie must be a delightful Hungry Bungry.

Mr. Eric: I'd like to thank Karen O'Keeffe, my co-creator, Craig Martinson for our theme song, my helper, Miss Lynn, Dessiree McFarland for her sound design, and all you kids at home who have ever worked really hard to learn from a mistake. That's how we keep growing even after we're grown up.

And until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme plays.]