

Chicken or the Egg?

By Aaron Weissman

Carly. Psst! Hey, Hey! It's your favorite secret host here, from your favorite oh-gosh-let's-really really-hope-it's-still-a-secret podcast. Today we finally confronted our letter writing suspect, but that's not all. We also went on a rip-roaring journey through time, all while debating one of the greatest philosophical mysteries of all time. So stick around, I'm Carly Q, and this is Who When Wow, Mystery Edition!

(Theme Song)

Carly. You better believe I was pumped coming into the office this morning. Last time we FINALLY figured out who left us that mysterious letter saying they were onto us. It was Amber, from HR! Or at least, that's where all our evidence is pointing.

Linda. Morning Carly Q. You look chipper today! Even more than usual!

Carly in the background. Yes oh yes I am. Because today's gonna be a big day Linda. Huge! Gigantic! Wow!

Linda. Wow! Wow! Wow wow wow wow WOW!

Carly. While Linda seemed to short circuit saying wow all over and over and over again. I slipped over to Amber's desk, and left a note asking her to come see me downstairs.

Carly in the background. Sincerely and with great enthusiasm, Carly Q.

(Soundbite of basement door closing.)

Carly. Alright Amber, let's see what you have to say for yourself. Down in the basement, I found Lewis and Nibbles already waiting at my desk. Even Odie was there!

Odie. Good morning Carly Q!

Lewis. Odie's here.

Carly. I see that. I almost didn't recognize you without the elevator! Um, welcome to my desk! This is where I keep my tiny items collection, here let me show you. Wait, no-- We have bigger things to discuss!

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

Carly. I sure did, Nibs! I just left the note on Amber's desk. Hopefully she's going to come down any minute, and we can finally get to the bottom of this. But just then-

(Soundbite of a thumb drive coming down the vacuum tube.)

Carly and Lewis. A new time-sealed file!

Odie. I don't usually do this part.

Strange P.A Voice. Event: (Beep) time immemorial (Beep) the chicken (Beep) egg?

Carly. Uhhh, what is up with that voice? Where's the regular one?

Lewis. Yeah. I do not approve.

Odie. Weirdly I agree with Lewis. That was weird.

Carly. Is this a front? Did Amber send this down to throw us off the scent?!

Lewis. Maybe?

Carly. What's up with the file itself? A memorial chicken egg?

Odie. Not quite. "Time immemorial," that means something that came from a very long time ago, like the distant past.

Carly. Okay, so a chicken egg from the very distant past? Like what gives?

Odie. I suspect that's exactly the question.

Lewis. How bout we run it past H-dad?

Carly. I took out my handheld digital assistance device, and plugged in the clues from the file. Time immemorial, Chicken, Egg.

(Soundbite of Carly typing.)

H-dad. This file refers to a philosophical paradox reaching back thousands of years. Which came first? Chicken emoji. Egg emoji!

Carly. Ohhhh well that's easy. Obviously the egg.

Lewis. "Obviously"? Obviously the chicken!

Carly. What?! No way!

Lewis. Excuse me?

Odie. Uh, friends?

(Soundbite of footsteps coming down the stairs.)

Carly. Amber!

Lewis. What do we do, what do we do? Should we hide and then jump out and surprise her?

Carly. What?! No! That is weird and creepy.

Lewis. It's not creepy, it's strong.

Amber. Umm, hello?

Everyone. Hi!

Carly. Amber! Amber!

Lewis. Love your outfit!

Carly. So good to see you. You got my note?!

Amber. Yes, I, sorry, I didn't know there were gonna be so many people all down here staring at me.

Carly. Oh! Don't worry about them, they're just, umm, Well we're all wondering, basically, about, um, a certain note, well a letter really, that.

Amber. Ummmmm okay bye!

Carly. What?!

(Soundbite of Amber running away.)

Carly. Ahh she's running! She's running! Like a bolt of lightning, Amber suddenly rushed past us.

Lewis. Where is she going?

Odie. Tell me she's not heading for the elevator.

Odie and Carly and Lewis. Oh nooooo!

(Soundbite of everyone running and then the elevator taking off.)

Odie. Nooo! She's gone. She went back in time!

Carly. And she didn't even listen to the rules first!

Odie. No she did not! The three of you must follow her, you've got to bring her back before she disrupts the timeline.

Lewis. But she took the elevator!

Odie. It's a temporal elevator, it can exist in all times simultaneously.

Lewis. And by that, you mean?

Carly. There's more than one!

Odie. I'm programming it to go exactly where Amber went.

(Soundbite of Odie typing into the elevator interface.)

Carly. This is great. A good old fashioned chase through time! Let's do this!

Lewis. But what about our weird time sealed chicken or egg mystery?

Carly. Not important right now!

Odie. Okay, it's ready. Hop in!

Carly. Any words of wisdom before we leave Odie?

Odie. Uhm. Find Amber?!

Carly. Thrilling conclusion to our hunt for the letter writer, here we cooome!

(Soundbite of elevator travel noises and then loud thud.)

Carly. For the first time in maybe ever, we had no idea when or where we were going. All we knew is we were following Amber. So imagine our surprise when we stepped out of the elevator onto a beautiful island!

Nibbles. Hey! This looks awfully familiar?

Lewis. Uh, yeah, cause we were just here looking for Atlantis? This is Thera Island

1600 BCE.

Nibbles. Thera Island?! This place exploded in a gigantic volcanic eruption!

Carly. That's right Nibbles! But hopefully we've got some time before that happens. Let's try and find Amber! We didn't see her anywhere, so we started walking the paved road, keeping our eyes peeled every which way. Before long we came upon the fishermen we talked to last time.

Carly. Hey there, any chance you've seen a woman pass through here recently? Answers to the name Amber, might be on some sort of maniacal quest to undermine us?

Fisherman. Uh ?Didn't you two just ask us about some place called Atlantis?

Carly. Oh! Right. That. Yeah, Atlantis is her name! Amber Atlantis! Sometimes we call her Double A! Like the battery. You actually probably don't know what that is, but imagine a little tube that is full of power.

Lewis. Okay. That's enough. Come on! Back to the elevator.

Nibbles. Wait, why are we back at the elevator?! We haven't found Double A yet!

Lewis. Because look! The elevator's about to take off again! That means Amber must have gone somewhere else, right?

Carly. Yeah! Let's get back in and see if we can grab her at the next stop! Let's go!

(Soundbite of elevator travel noises.)

Carly. We stepped out of the elevator into some sort of mountainous region. Where are we now?

Lewis. Hmm big mountain peaks, howling mountain air.and no sign of Amber! Where are we?

Carly. I think I might know, look at that big rock sticking up into the sky.

Lewis. (gasps) Weaver's Needle! We're back in the Superstition Mountains in the 1860s!

Carly. Bingo Lewis! We came here when we were trying to solve the mystery of the Lost Dutchman's Mine.

Nibbles. Hey look, over there!

Carly. Nibbles was pointing at something off in the distance. Or rather, someone in fact, it looked like a couple of someones.

Lewis. OMG!

Carly. What?

Lewis. That's us! That's us when we were here before!

Carly. He started waving, and the figures in the distance waved back. I suddenly remembered it from last time, when that was us! It was just after we found that golden snail. Wow, so WE were the people waving at us?

Lewis. I feel like my brain's exploding!

Nibbles. Keep your brains intact, humans. We gotta find Amber!

Carly. That's right, Nibbles! It seems like she's revisiting locations we investigated earlier on other time sealed mystery hunts.

Lewis. But why? What is she after?!

Nibbles. Kinda reminds me of the chicken or the egg mystery. Did Amber come here because we already investigated here? Or did we investigate here in the first place because of something with Amber?

Carly. Wait so you mean, was Amber behind everything?! Has she been pulling the strings on us the whole time?

Nibbles. I don't know. Now MY brain feels weird.

Lewis. Carly, how do you still think it's the egg?

Carly. Uh, what?

Lewis. The chicken or the egg. It has GOT to be the chicken that came first. You can't have an egg without a chicken to lay it!

Carly. Lewis I STRONGLY disagree, chickens aren't the only animals that lay eggs.

Nibbles. Okay eggheads, NOT the venue for this. The elevator's about to take off again, look!

Lewis. Ahh she's right! So Amber's already leaving this place?

Carly. Looks like it. Come on, let's go! We hustled back into the elevator, and -

(Soundbite of running and then elevator travel noise.)

Carly. We stepped out of the elevator into a very fancy hotel, in the midst of some kind of big party. It only took us a second to figure out where we were.

Carly and Lewis. The haunted Pfister Hotel. Milwaukee Wisconsin, 1893!

Lewis. Any sign of Amber? Why in the world would she have come here?

Carly. Maybe she's coming back to all these locations to erase some kind of evidence? Ooh, or maybe she's looking for something we accidentally left behind?

Nibbles. Ooh that's smart Carly.

Lewis. Well I suppose that's possible.

Carly. Oooh or maybe she got abducted by aliens and now they're using her as a puppet to enact their master plan for world domination?

Nibbles. Ooh I love puppets. When's the show?

Lewis. Yeah, I'm guessing it's one of the first two. But let's have a look around!

Carly. We started making our way through the party until Lewis spotted a plate of deviled eggs, which reminded him of You Know What.

Lewis. Okay, you said you strongly disagreed with my chicken take, right? What have you got?

Carly. A hard-boiled slice of truth! (sound bite of her taking a bite) Ohh, these deviled eggs are good.

Nibbles. Ooh I love deviled eggs. Especially when they're a little off.

Carly. Okay Lewis, look, I'm no evolutionary biologist, but I'm still pretty sure some kind of egg came into existence long before the first kind of chicken.

Lewis. How?

Carly. Well life was around for millions of years before dinosaurs and thus birds, and thus chickens came around.

Lewis. Uh okaaaay, but I think -

Nibbles. Look, it's Amber! There she goes!

Amber. Leave me alone!

Carly. Let's go! We raced up to where Nibbles saw her, but the hallway was empty.

Lewis. (out of breath) Wait, so Amber's not just a letter-writing mastermind, she's also a track star?

Carly. Wait. OMG, OMG.

Lewis. What, cross country?

Carly. No, Lewis. The numbers!

Lewis. What?

Carly. Hang on. Looking at the numbers on the hotel room doors made me realize something. I guess it was seeing them all in a row, going up one by one, that made it click. I just needed to do some quick arithmetic.

Carly. (to herself) 2 times 7 plus 1, 3 times 7 plus 2, carry the 1, divide by zero.

Lewis. Uh Carly?

Carly. Yeah. Okay Lewis, I think I figured it out. The locations we've been going to aren't random. They're following a numerical pattern of where we've been before, in order!

Nibbles. Which means?

Carly. That instead of waiting for the elevator to follow Amber again, we could follow the pattern and go to where she, theoretically, is headed to next. Assuming I'm right about the pattern, we'd beat her there!

Lewis. Wow, okay math-lete superstar. Let's try it out!

Carly. We raced back down to the elevator, punched in the coordinates for where I was pretty sure Amber would show up next, and.

(Soundbite of elevator travel noises.)

Carly. We stepped out into a lush jungle, teeming with beautiful flowers and leafy trees.

Lewis. Um isn't this the jungle that got hit by an asteroid and killed all the dinosaurs?

Carly. Sure is! Chicxulub, 66 million years ago. According to my calculations, THIS is where Amber's gonna show up next.

Nibbles. Hope she shows up before the asteroid! Plus the earlier version of us is around here somewhere running away from a T-rex!

Lewis. Then while we wait, allow me to finish schooling you on chickens and eggs. You made a fair point earlier about eggs in general, but the question isn't about that, it's about chicken eggs, specifically!

Carly. Doesn't matter, the egg still came first! Evolution means that plants and animals change over time, so at some point there would have been an animal that's like a chicken, an "almost-chicken," if you will, and it could have laid an actual egg. And inside that actual egg was the first ACTUAL chicken. The egg came first!

Lewis. Right, but. Actually, I don't have an answer to that.

Carly. And at that moment. Look out!

(Soundbite of elevator landing.)

Carly. The other elevator arrived! Just a few yards away. The doors opened and out came Amber!

Carly. Ahah! My plan worked, it worked! There she is!

Lewis. Okay, let's be careful, she might have some kind of dangerous weapon on her, like a freeze ray, or a spatula?

Nibbles. You really need to read more comic books, Lewis.

Lewis. I really do.

Carly. Come on, let's just go talk to her! We raced over to Amber, and not only did she not have a freeze ray, she actually seemed, scared?

Amber. Ahh help me you have to help me, I can't get the elevator to stop jumping, HELP!

Lewis. Wait what?

(Soundbite of a rumbling noise from up in the sky.)

Nibbles. Uh-oh. Look up, here comes the asteroid!

Amber. Asteroid?! Where are we?

Carly. Amber, listen, we're going to help you, come with us and we'll take you back to Butthead. But then you HAVE to tell us what is going on, deal?

(Soundbite of more rumbling and then T-Rex stomping.)

Amber. Uh, was that a dinosaur?

Lewis. Almost certainly.

Amber. Deal! It's a deal!

Carly. We ran back to the elevator, and mere moments before the asteroid hit-Hang on!

(Soundbite of elevator travel noises.)

Odie. You're back, you're all back, thank goodness! I was so worried.

Carly. All good Odie, we are all okay. Including Amber, who we had to chase through TIME!

Lewis. Yeah, what WAS that about Amber?

Amber. I'm sorry, I'm so sorry. When you confronted me, I got flustered. I just panicked and ran, and then I was in the elevator and I must have pressed something I shouldn't have, cause then it just kept jumping to all these different time periods.

Odie. To previous locations it's recently been to.

Carly. According to a pattern I, Carly Q, was able to deduce and then use to find you!

Lewis. Ok. Nobody likes a show-off Carly Q.

H-dad. Analysis complete! Scientists believe, evolutionarily speaking, the egg came first, well before the chicken. Carly was correct!

Lewis. You are NOT helping, H-dad!

Carly. Yes! I am in a roll!

Lewis. You mean on a roll.

Carly. Whatevs. I love rolls. They're like biscuits, but not as formal you know?

Amber. I'm really sorry, everyone. I did not mean to cause so much trouble. Thank you for rescuing me.

Carly. Yes and you're very welcome, no prob, love to do it. But Amber, what about the letter? What are you after?! Why are you out to get us?

Amber. Out to get you?! No, no, no. I mean, yes, I was the one that wrote you that letter. But I am NOT out to get you. I don't mean you any harm or ill-will, that's not why I wrote the letter at all!

Carly. Then why?

Amber. Because, I'm a fan!

Carly. (pause) Come again?

Amber. I found your secret podcast, and I love it! It's my favorite thing! I'm such a fan I even started my OWN secret podcast. Here, listen.

(Soundbite of beep from Amber's phone.)

Amber. I'm Amber T, and this is the Who When Wow Mystery Edition podcast recap podcast!

Carly. You have a Who When Wow Mystery Edition recap pod?

Amber. Sure do.

Carly. I, am, speechless!

Amber. The truth is, I've got the same questions you do about these time sealed files!

Carly. So. This whole time, all the angst I had about this, all the sleepless nights and it turns out you're just a fan of the podcast?

Amber. Well, I prefer to think of myself as a SUPER fan.

Carly. So were you also behind all the other mysterious stuff that's been going on? Like the footprint in the kitchen?

Lewis. That was water dripping from the ceiling, remember?

Carly. Oh, right. But the stapler being out of staples?

Odie. That was the day you had too much hot cocoa and stapled all of the envelopes shut in the outgoing mail.

Carly. Oh right.

Lewis. None of that matters. Obvi - Amber is behind the mysterious time sealed file we got this morning.

Amber. Uhm, I didn't send you a time sealed file. How would I even do that?

Lewis. The weird voice with the chicken or the egg mystery?

Amber. Wasn't me. I'm allergic to eggs.

Odie. Then, who was it?

Carly. Okay. I think we're gonna have to put a pin in that one.

Lewis. A big pin. Really big. It should also be red.

Amber. I really am so sorry about all this. I never wanted to cause all this trouble, and I understand Carly if you're upset with me. I didn't mean to upstage your podcast with mine.

Carly. Oh. I'm not worried about that. You know, I'm actually kind of flattered. The reality is, there's room for INFINITE podcasts! Pods supporting pods! Women supporting women! I love this!

Odie. Here, here, basement companion.

(Soundbite of everyone in the background speaking.)

Carly. Wow oh wow what a day. After we all said goodbye, I had a hard time getting back down to work. I was still so hopped up from our wild chase through time. I'm so relieved we figured everything out! Though it certainly is unsettling that it was someone ELSE who sent us that strange time-sealed file. I wonder who it was, and what THEY'RE after? But I guess that's a mystery for another day. Until then, this is Carly Q, signing off. And remember: you DEFINITELY never heard this!