

Podcast: What If World
Episode: 009: What if I turned into a video game
File Length: 00:18:02
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[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. My name's Mr. Eric, and this is our first bonus episode. So let's get right to our question.

Cash: My name is Cash, what if I could turn myself into a hamburger?

Mr. Eric: Didn't we already do a hamburger story?

Parent: So, did you want to ask something else, too?

Cash: [unclear] What if I could [unclear] to a video game?

Parent: Say thank you.

Cash: Thank you.

Mr. Eric: Oh, you'd like to see what happens if you turn into a video game. That is a very interesting question. Let's find out.

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Once upon a time there was a space captain named Captain Keira.

Captain Keira: Space date: November 15th, 2016. My crew and I have been searching all of outer space for What If World's oldest video game, Super Spelunker. In case you didn't know, a spelunker is like a person who searches caves. You know, why are we searching in outer space? I bet a game like that would probably be in a cave, right?

Mr. Mock: Illogical, Captain.

Mr. Eric: Said Mock, Captain Keira's Lieutenant.

Mr. Mock: That's like saying just because my name is Mock means I need to make fun of you every time I get the chance. By the way, nice pants.

Captain Keira: Thank you. I'm very fond of these pants, by— Are you making fun of my pants?

Mr. Mock: Well, it's just I've never seen polka dots and zebra stripes go together so poorly.

Captain Keira: Oh, Mock. I don't know why I made you my Lieutenant. I bet if we take this space ship to a cave planet, we'll find that video game right away.

Mr. Mock: Okay, sure thing. Whatever you say. Oh, brother.

Mr. Eric: And off they flew to the first cave planet they could find and deep into the dark caverns of this spikey, mountainous, cave-filled planet, they landed their ship.

Captain Keira: Okay, if my guess is correct, we should find the game Super Spelunker right here.

Mr. Mock: That is so completely illogical. It's like, why would we find it here in all of outer sp—

Mr. Eric: Mock had tripped over something.

Captain Keira: What's that you just tripped over? Sounded like a video game cartridge.

Mr. Mock: I—it—uh, it is.

Mr. Eric: Mock picked up the video game. Super Spelunker. It still had its original label showing a brother and sister wearing mining gear and wielding little pick axes.

Captain Keira: Looks like mission accomplished.

Mr. Mock: That's another thing, Captain, what's with this mission anyway. Like, why did we need to find this video game so bad?

Captain Keira: Well, because I've always wanted to play it.

Mr. Mock: Keira, you're a space captain. You don't have time to play video games!

Captain Keira: Of course not. I'm far too busy. But this allows you to become a video game if you unlock the secret level.

Mr. Mock: You know you've never been any good at video games, Captain Keira.

Captain Keira: Well, I'm gonna get good at this one.

Mr. Eric: And so Captain Keira got back into her space ship and plugged in the video game.

Captain Keira: Space computer, play video game.

Mr. Eric: And a little screen popped up, just in front of Captain Keira. [8-bit mimicking music plays] And a tiny little remote appeared in front of her.

Captain Keira: Okay, Super Spelunker, let's see what you've got.

Mr. Eric: And she started playing the game, all the while Mock standing over her shoulder, not being incredibly supportive. Do you think Captain Keira was good at the game at first? No, sir.

[8-bit video game dying sound]

Captain Keira: What happened? I was just trying to put my mining helmet on.

Mr. Mock: Well, somehow, you managed to mess that up and lose your first life. Next time, try not putting the mining helmet on spike-side first.

Captain Keira: Okay. I'm a quick learner.

Mr. Eric: Captain Keira lost time and again and Mock said,

Mr. Mock: You know, if you just let me sit down and play this video game for about five minutes, I bet I could unlock the secret level for you.

Captain Keira: That's not the point. If you unlock the secret level, you'll become the video game.

Mr. Mock: Oh, whatever. I'll just hand you the remote right before I unlock it.

Captain Keira: That could work. Anyhow, I've got to get back to work soon, so yeah, let's do it.

Mr. Eric: And Mock picked up the video game controller and he was jumping over cave monsters and digging deep tunnels and building giant castles, and he got the golden pick, then the diamond pick, then the diamond platinum sapphire pick. He was really good at this game somehow.

Captain Keira: It's not fair. I'm so good at captaining space ships you'd think this would be easy for me.

Mr. Mock: Well, you know, growing up I had several big brothers who would never let me play the video games so I would stay up late at night and practice on my own, that way when I—

Captain Keira: Listen, I didn't ask for your life story, Mock. I asked for you to unlock the secret level. [8-bit chimes]

Mr. Mock: Yeah, and here it is, I just unlock—

Captain Keira: Quick, hand me the remote.

Mr. Eric: Captain Keira grabbed for the remote, but Mock's hand was still on it.

[8-bit chimes play followed by a sci-fi rising tone]

They both turned into video games.

Captain Keira: Oh man, Lieutenant Mock, you really messed up this time.

Mr. Mock: Ah, pickle juice. Seems like we're both stuck in this video game now.

Captain Keira: Well that's just what I always wanted.

Mr. Mock: Okay, fine. You go off and play with your video game world and I'll try to take a nap. I'm no longer really interested in video games ever since I played them all those nights long ago—

Captain Keira: Again with the video game stuff. I just want to go play.

Mr. Mock: Yeah, that's fine, that's fine.

Mr. Eric: And Mock sat down in the middle of the level one cave while Captain Keira tried to put her miner's helmet on.

Captain Keira: Okay, I'm not going to mess this up this time.

[Dying sound]

Mr. Eric: But she did! She put her spiked miner's helmet on upside down and just like that she was down a life.

Captain Keira: Well, that's okay. I'll put it on the correct way this time.

Mr. Eric: She put on her helmet, picked up her wooden pick axe and walked out into the first level. Right away she had to jump over a little cave rat. Then she had to dodge a giant spider. Then there were creeping slugs working their way up to her, covering the gold she needed to unlock the next level.

Captain Keira: I know just what to do.

Mr. Eric: She said.

Captain Keira: [Echoing] Mock, please help me.

Mr. Eric: Mock stood up and looked out on the rest of level one and saw Captain Keira surrounded by monster, still about 20 feet away from the gold she needed to win.

Mr. Mock: Here we go.

Mr. Eric: Mock jumped out, dodging all the creatures, jumping on half of their heads. Swiping the gold right out from under the slimy slugs. And...

[8-bit chimes play]

The level was over.

Captain Keira: Well, that was fun. And I still have two lives left.

Mr. Mock: Yeah, I've still got three of my lives left. Hey, you ever wonder what might happen if we ran out of lives in this video game?

Captain Keira: I don't know, I guess we just have to put in a few more tokens.

Mr. Mock: Tokens? How are we going to put in tokens? We are the video game.

Captain Keira: Uh, then I guess we'll just have to press the reset button.

Mr. Mock: Captain Keira. We are inside the video game.

Captain Keira: Oh, that's right. Let's just make sure we don't lose any more lives.

Mr. Eric: And right at that moment, a giant frog tongue shot out from the middle of level two.

Yooooooooooooommmph. [Smacks}

And swallowed Captain Keira whole.

[Dying sound]

Captain Keira reappeared at the beginning of level two.

Captain Keira: Uh-oh. We've got to get out of this video game and fast.

Mr. Mock: First, you want to play video games all the time. Now you're in a video game for five minutes and you want out.

Captain Keira: Mock, as your space captain, I command you to win all the levels and get us out of this game.

Mr. Mock: We're in a video game now. You're not anybody's captain. You don't even listen to me when I try to tell you about myself.

Captain Keira: What does that have to do with anything?

Mr. Eric: And suddenly the frog tongue shot out again.

Yooooooooooooooooommmph.

And Mock pushed Captain Keira out of the way.

Captain Keira: How dare you push your captain?

Mr. Mock: I just saved your life, Captain. Ugh, I'm so frustrated with you right now.

Mr. Eric: And Mock ran out into the middle of level two, a little reckless this time. He was jumping all over the place, getting really close to dangerous spiders and goblins and giant cave trolls. They were all trying to grab him. Some of them were trying to eat him. But Mock was really good. He grabbed coin after coin and got straight to the diamond.

Captain Keira: Wow, Mock. You are really good at these video games.

Mr. Mock: Thanks, Captain. I think that's the first nice thing you've said to me all day.

Captain Keira: I guess you're right. But you know, you tease me, sometimes, too.

Mr. Mock: Well, just because my name's mock doesn't mean I only ever want to tease you. I want to be your friend, too. It's just—

[Slurping noise] [8-bit death noise]

Mr. Eric: Oh no! Mock got eaten by the giant frog! The diamond dropped where it was and Mock reappeared behind Captain Keira.

Mr. Mock: I'm down to two lives now. I should really pay attention to what I'm doing.

Mr. Eric: Mock put his helmet back on, picked up his pick axe and headed back into the level. Captain Keira put a hand on his shoulder.

Captain Keira: You know, I never realized that this could be a co-op game.

Mr. Mock: Yeah, of course it's got a cooperative element. We could have been playing two players this whole time, but you just didn't seem to want to listen to me or play with me.

Captain Keira: You're right. I've been a total—

[Slurping noise]

Mr. Eric: They'd spent too long talking again! The frog tongue was reaching out for Captain Keira but she was on her last life. Mock threw himself in the way and got scooped up by the giant frog tongue.

[Slurping noise] [8-bit death]

They were both down to their last life.

Captain Keira: You know, I don't really think I want to play this game anymore.

Mr. Mock: Well, Captain, I'm sorry to say, I think the only way to get out of this video game is to finish it. So let's stop talking and start finishing.

Captain Keira: Okay! I mean, zip. My mouth is sealed, I mean I'm going to stop... talking... right.. n—

Mr. Mock: Come on, let's go!

[8-bit video game noises play in the background]

Mr. Eric: They both put on their helmets, picked up their pick axes and dove into level two. And man, when they were working together, they could grab every coin. They could bounce on top of every monster's head. They could solve every puzzle lickety-split! This time, Captain Keira got to the diamond first.

Captain Keira: I've got the diamond. Come on, quick. Get over here.

Mr. Mock: And Mock was jumping up to the platform that held the diamond just as the frog's giant tongue was reaching towards the both of them.

[Slurping noise]

And—

[8-bit chimes]

They disappeared into the next level.

Captain Keira: This could be a tough game.

Mr. Mock: You know what? I think now that we're working together, it's going to be as easy as pie.

Mr. Eric: But it wasn't that easy. It was hard work. And it was a lot of levels to get through and they only had one life left. But they managed to get to the final boss. The boss after the secret stage.

Boss: Yeaarrrrggghh. Who dares to mine in the cave of Dracomax?

Captain Keira: Oh dear, this dragon means business.

Mr. Mock: Oh, hey, Dracomax. We're really just trying to get out of this video game and we actually don't want to fight you at all.

Dracomax: Fight me? I've been stuck in this video game waiting for someone to get to the last level for a thousand years! I just want to talk.

Captain Keira: I really don't feel like hearing your whole life story and—

Mr. Mock: Captain! Remember how we—you said you were going to be a better listener.

Captain Keira: I actually never said that. I said I'd try to be a better friend, I think.

Mr. Mock: [Exasperated noises] It's the—mm. The two things are one and the same. We've got to listen to this guy or he will eat us.

Dracomax: No, I would never eat you. I'm a vegetarian. Of course, if you don't get to the emerasaphquis diamond in about five minutes, this whole level's going to explode.

Captain Keira: And you just want to sit here and talk?

Dracomax: No, we'll talk for four minutes, 55 seconds and then I'll let you get the gem.

Mr. Mock: Yeah, uh, Captain Keira, I think that's really what we ought to do.

Captain Keira: Okay, let's get this started.

Dracomax: Well, as you know, I often get trapped in things. Mountains, video games. One time, I was trapped in a mayonnaise bottle. And I've begun to think, what is it about me that makes me so darn trappable?

Captain Keira: You know, if you don't want to get trapped some place, just don't go into things that are smaller than you.

Dracomax: That's right... that mountain was pretty small, this video game was even smaller. And that mayonnaise bottle, huh. It was just a sample size.

Mr. Mock: Captain Keira, that was actually good advice.

Captain Keira: How do you think I got to be a space captain in the first place?

Mr. Mock: I never thought about—

Robotic Voice: Five... Four...

Mr. Eric: They still hadn't gotten the gem!

Robotic Voice: Three...

Mr. Eric: The whole level was about to explode.

Captain Keira: We've got to get the emerasaphiraturqoidiamond—whatever it's called, get it fast!

Mr. Eric: And Dracomax took his tail off the gem and the two of them grabbed it at once and—[8-bit game rising tone]

They were back on their space ship. Only problem was, there was Dracomax, too.

Dracomax: Ugh, hey guys. You've freed me, too. Eheh. Thanks. Only, I think this space ship is a little small for me...

Captain Keira: Looks like it's time to get a new ship.

Mr. Mock: You can say that, again.

Dracomax: You mean I can keep this space ship?

Captain Keira: It looks like this space ship's keeping you, Dracomax.

Dracomax: Hooray! Ooh.

Mr. Eric: The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric:

Wow! I can't believe how far they got with just one life left and I'm so glad they didn't get stuck in that video game. I'd like to thank Cash again for his great question, Karen Marshall, my producer, Craig Martinson for writing our awesome theme song, and all you folks at home for your continued support.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme song plays.]

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