

Podcast: What If World

Episode: 011: What if a weasel could fly?

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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 lead to off the cuff stories. Welcome back, we took a week off for Thanksgiving. I hope you all had a nice break, too. And we are back with a question from Teagan.

Teagan: My name is Teagan. What if a weasel could fly?

Mr. Eric: Ah, what if A weasel could fly, so not necessarily every weasel. Okay, okay, interesting question. Teagan is also from our friend podcast Buttons and Figs, so if you haven't checked them out yet, I really suggest that you do.

Teagan, I want to get straight to your story today. I hope you enjoy it.

[Rising harp scale.]

Once upon a time, there was a weasel named Stevie. And Stevie was a city weasel. He lived in the biggest city in all of What If World: New What City. New What City had lots of very tall buildings, hundreds of stories high. People traveled all over New What City using bikes and motorcycles and trains and cars. But some of them rode on unicorns and dinosaurs. In fact, some of them were unicorns and dinosaurs. However, like all cities, it had its rodents and its insects and one of the rodents of New What City was the weasel.

There weren't many weasels in New What City, and they were stuck living on the ground outside. No one would really let them into their buildings. Most weasels just accepted this as the way things were, but one weasel, Stevie, wasn't quite ready to give up.

Stevie: Hey, Ma. I was thinking I would go down to the grocery store and pick us up some bugs for lunch.

Ma Weasel: All right, honey, come right back as soon as you got your—Stevie, you know you can't get into that Trader Who's, Trader Where's, whatever they call it.

Stevie: Yeah, I know, Ma, but I'm going to try to, you know, weasel my way in, if you know what I mean.

Mr. Eric: And off Stevie ran, dodging under cars, crawling up over street signs to get a better view. Jumping from head to head, from person to person, animal to animal.

Various: Ow! Hey! Hey! A weasel!

Mr. Eric: All the way to Trader Who's.

Stevie: Hey there, I was thinking I would just come in and buy a couple of bugs for me and my mum for lunch there.

Mr. Eric: The security guard was a big rhinoceros who looked down at Stevie over its long horn.

Security Rhino: I'm sorry, but we can't let weasels into this store.

Stevie: Oh, that's okay. I'm not really a weasel at all. I'm a Fleasel.

Security Rhino: A fleasel... well, that, uh, that's certainly not a weasel.

Stevie: Yeah, sure, I'm a fleasel. It's a... it's like a flying weasel but not really like a weasel at all. More like a flying thing.

Security Rhino: Oh, I'm sorry. If you're a flying creature, you certainly must not be some kind of rodent,

Mr. Eric: said the rhinoceros.

Security Rhino: Why don't you just fly on through and pick up any groceries you like.

[Record scratch]

Stevie: Oh, uh, yeah, yeah. Well, it's just, I'm kind of tuckered out. I flew all the way here.

Security Rhino: If you can't fly, then you're no fleasel. Get out of my sight.

Mr. Eric: The rhinoceros didn't look too friendly as it stomped its foot.

Security Rhino: [Stomp] [Grunt]

Mr. Eric: And Stevie knew how to take a hint. He backed on out of there.

Stevie: Ah man, why'd I have to come up with such a crazy story? But you know what? It would be kind of great to fly.

Mr. Eric: Stevie looked all around. He saw all kinds of flying creatures in New What City. There were of course flowercorns who had flower wings that let them fly. There were pigeons and airplanes, helicopters. He grabbed a piece of paper somebody had crumbled up and threw on the street.

Stevie: Ah, what a waste. But I can use this to make some notes.

Mr. Eric: He took out his sharp little claw and dipped it in some dirt on the street and started scratching some notes, looking at all these flying things he could see.

Stevie: All right, all right, I think I can figure this flying thing out. I just need really, really big wings. Okay, and maybe flowers, ah, no, there's not enough flowers in New What City.

Mr. Eric: He looked around for something he could use to help him fly. There was a big blue recycling bin at the corner.

Stevie: You know, it's always better to reuse than recycle, I hear.

Mr. Eric: And he dove in nose first and wiggled around the recycling bin grabbing all the plastic he could find and tossing it out onto the street.

Stevie: Oh, I'm gonna make a real good flying suit with all of this.

Mr. Eric: When he climbed out of the recycling bin, quite the crowd had formed around him.

Person 1: What, weasels?

Person 2: He's littering!

Person 1: Making a mess!

Person 3: He's not recycling at all, he's decycling.

Stevie: No, no, hey. You got the wrong idea. I'm just gonna use all this recycling to make myself a flying suit, that way I can be a fleasel.

Person 1: A fleasel?

Person 2: That's real funny.

Person 3: Never heard of a fleasel before. It sounds itchy.

Stevie: No, it's like a flying wea—oh, I don't have to explain myself to you.

Mr. Eric: He gathered up all his plastic bottles and ran off down an alley. He worked for what felt like ages. His stomach felt so empty he could barely focus. But he didn't want to go home without any food for he and his mother.

Stevie: All right, this flying suit seems, well, I hope it's okay.

Mr. Eric: He put on this big suit. It looked kind of like if an astronaut were made out of 2-liter soda bottles. And the wings were made up of thousands tiny strips of plastic all strung together.

Stevie: I sure hope this works.

Mr. Eric: He climbed halfway up the side of the Where-pire State Building.

Stevie: Uh, that's maybe a little too far.

Mr. Eric: He climbed about a quarter of the way down.

Stevie: That seems good.

Mr. Eric: And off he dove! Whoosh. It seemed like he was doing a pretty okay job at first, flapping his tiny little arms to make these giant weasel wings go.

Stevie: Hey, I'm flying—oooh.

Mr. Eric: The wings didn't hold him up for long. He started tumbling down, barely keeping afloat. He flapped as fast as he could, as hard as he could, and managed to get just a little bit of wind as he flew almost into the side of the next building.

Stevie: Yeaaaaooooooh!

Mr. Eric: He managed to slow down just enough that he didn't smash into the side. Instead he just scrambled down the side of the other building in his plastic suit.

Stevie: That didn't work out so well at all.

Person 1: Look at that weasel, that weasel thinks he can fly.

Person 2: He did manage to float for a little bit, it was actually pretty impressive.

Person 3: It must be a young fleasel. The young ones don't know to fly as well, I hear.

Stevie: I'll get it. You'll see. I'll show all of ya.

Mr. Eric: He scrambled back to his alley to start working again. This time he made the wings even bigger and stronger, and he taped up his suit with all the duct tape he could find. He even started to paint it some of his favorite colors, purple and orange, so it'd really stand out once he got to flying. He also went around talking to all the things that could fly in New What City. The helicopters couldn't give him much good advice.

Helicopter: Oh, well, you just have to spin around and around and around and around and I like spinning...

Mr. Eric: The planes weren't much help either.

Plane: Yeah, those are nice wings. Okay. So now all you gotta do is you gotta shoot fire out of your butt. And then if you shoot enough fire, right out of that bottom of yours, then uh...

Mr. Eric: But the flowercorns had some good advice.

Flowercorn: You've built some nice wings here, they should be big enough. And you've studied really hard and worked even harder. I think now it's just time to take a chance.

Mr. Eric: Stevie Weasel was awfully worried, but he was also awfully hungry.

Stevie: All right. I did all the math, I double checked all my figures. This should work. This has gotta work.

Mr. Eric: He started climbing back up the Wherepire State Building.

Person 1: Oh, here this one goes again. Oh boy.

Person 2: I hope it doesn't get hurt.

Person 3: My best friend was a fleasel.

Mr. Eric: He looked down at the crowd below him and got good footing on a ledge of the building.

Stevie: I don't got nothing to prove to any of you bodies. I just want to fly to prove to myself that I can.

Person 1: Sure, well, it's really funny watching you fail, so, go ahead, give it a shot.

Person 2: I believe in you, fleasel.

Person 3: Teddy Roosevelt was a fleasel.

Mr. Eric: He spread his wings, twice as long and wide as before. And there was a gasp from everyone below. They were beautiful.

Crowd: [Gasps]

Mr. Eric: This time, he didn't run and jump, he just flapped the wings. Again, and again, and again. And he was floating above the ledge.

Person 1: My goodness gracious, he actually did it.

Person 2: [Chanting] Fleasel! Fleasel! Fleasel!

Person 3: Fleasels can fly now?

Mr. Eric: And just like that, he took off around the block, whoo! Whoo! Whoo! Flying as fast as he could, ducking around the other flying creatures. Going higher and higher until all the people below were out of sight.

Stevie: I did it. I flew! I'm a fleasel! [Crying]. Ooh, I'm a hungry fleasel, that's what.

Mr. Eric: From the top of the Wherepire State Building, he could all the way to the apple orchards of upstate New What. He knew there'd be lots of bugs to eat there.

Stevie: Well, I'm off. See you later, city!

Mr. Eric: And he dove off again, flying even more gracefully than before. He got all the way to the orchard in 20 minutes and oh man, were there bugs around this time of year. Weasels are predators, you know. He couldn't eat the apples even if he wanted to, but he sure could fill himself up on bugs.

Stevie: Mm, oh man. My stomach's never been this full. Oh, mum's gonna be so excited when—uh-oh.

Mr. Eric: How long had it been? Had there been any food left in the fridge that day? He grabbed up all the bugs he could and flew as fast as he could back to his mother.

Stevie: Hey ma, guess what? I uh, I'm sorry I'm a little late but I flew and I got all these bugs, and—

Ma Weasel: You're really late, and you took the last of the money with you. I had to go scrounging for scraps.

Stevie: But look, I got all these bugs and I know there's a place in upstate New What, and there's so many bugs there and I can fly you there, now—

Ma Weasel: I don't want to leave my home. This city's where I grew up. Stevie, you may be a fleasel now, but your mother's still a weasel.

Stevie: Oh, Ma, it's okay. I'll make you your own suit, you can fly with me and it'll be great.

Ma Weasel: You can fly. I'm very proud of you, but I'm not leaving.

Mr. Eric: Just then, he heard a crowd of people in the street. It must have been some kind of parade or something.

Stevie: What's that over there?

Ma Weasel: Oh, I don't know. All these people been gathered out there ever since you took off.

Stevie: Really?

Mr. Eric: He walked to the edge of the alley where he and his mother lived. And there were all kinds of people gathered there. Grown ups and children. Airplanes and helicopters. Even that rhinoceros security guard.

Security Rhino: Uh, I heard that you, uh, learned how to make suits that can help people fly?

Mr. Eric: The rhinoceros was shyly stamping its large foot.

Security Rhino: Maybe you could make a suit for me. I'd pay ya.

Stevie: What? Earlier this morning you wouldn't even let me into your store.

Security Rhino: Well, I'm a security guard, I was just doing my job.

Stevie: I'll tell you what. You start treating me and my mother as equals, then maybe we can do business.

Helicopter: Huh, circles are fun, whoa whoa whoa whoa.

Mr. Eric: A new helicopter suddenly landed on a nearby building and out of that chopper jumped a smartly dressed little tabby cat who quickly climbed its way down the building.

JF Kat: I heard there was a weasel here who was inventing flying suits?

Stevie: Sure, yeah. I got, I figured it out. It was really tough but—

JF Kat: Could I get, er uh, one of those? I don't like these helicopters. I keep wanting to play with the blades with my paws, and I've almost lost a paw doing it.

Stevie: Sure, yeah. I can make you one, but you gotta do something for me, first.

JF Kat: I'm J.F. Kat. You ask for it, you've got it.

Mr. Eric: Stevie the fleasel looked at his mom.

Stevie: I want weasels to be able to go all the same places as other people.

JF Kat: What do you mean?

Stevie: I mean, we live in this city. If it weren't for us, you'd have a serious bug problem. So, show us some respect and give us our rights.

JF Kat: Very well. From this day forward, all weasels and er, uh, fleasels, have the same rights as anyone else in New What City. Now where's my flying suit?

Mr. Eric: Suddenly everyone on the block was waving money around trying to get in line to have a suit made for them.

Stevie: Hey ma, looks like I won't be moving to that apple orchard any time soon.

Ma Weasel: Well, you can if you want someday, son. Until then, you want some help making some of these suits?

Stevie: Ah, Ma! You read my mind.

Security Rhino: I want one, do they come rhinoceros size.

Person 2: I want one, but I don't want my sister to have one.

Person 3: Is there a senior citizen discount?

Mr. Eric: The end

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric:

That was a really cool question. I hope you all enjoyed the story. I'd like to thank Teagan for her awesome question. Buttons and Figs, the podcast. Karen Marshall, my producer, and Craig Martinson for our awesome theme. I don't say it often enough, I really, really love it. I hope to hear from you all soon.

And until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme song plays.]

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