

Podcast: What If World
Episode: 016 What if dogs never grew?
File Length: 00:22:38
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.

Mr. Eric: Hey there folks, and welcome back to What If World, the show where your questions and ideas inspire off the cuff stories. This is episode 16! Oh, podcasts grow up so fast. And I'm Mr. Eric, your host. We're going to get started with a question from Henry.

Henry: My name is Henry. I like dogs. What if dogs never grew? Thank you.

Mr. Eric: Hey, Henry. Thanks for your question, and thanks to your Mom for all the help she gave you. It's really really good to get help from your parents. Henry, I want to tell you what would happen if dogs never grew up.

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Not so long ago, a little puppy was born. And this puppy was named Howdy Pooch. Howdy Pooch got all the attention from every human he met, including the Mom and Dad who adopted him. They loved Howdy Pooch so much. They gave him a treat every time he went to the bathroom outside rather than inside. They picked him up when he fell down. They scratched his ears when he had a hard time getting his paw to the right ear in just the right spot. And, they took him to the dog park.

Howdy Pooch: My name's Howdy Pooch, nice to meet y'all.

[Dogs barking]

Fred: Tone it down a notch, puppy.

Mr. Eric: Said Fred the dog. If you remember, Fred was a pug who had a tongue way too long for its mouth, which is why he talked a little funny.

Fred: Howdy Pooch, we like to keep things calm around here. I'm old dog, and this is my dog park.

Howdy Pooch: It's your dog park? Oh, how'd you get a whole dog park to yourself, that's real swell.

Fred: Well, it's not mine, but I come here a lot and I'm old so the other dogs listen to me.

Howdy Pooch: Oh, you are really old. What's it like being old? I like being young and a puppy, but I bet being old's real fun, too.

Fred: Oh, no. No. It's real hard being an old dog. Now instead of getting treats when I go pee pee outside, I only get treats when I give paws.

Howdy Pooch: Giving paws? What's that mean.

Fred: Oh, it's horrible. You got to sit down on your bottom, and then you've got to give a paw in the air and give it to a human for no reason.

Howdy Pooch: What? Well, that don't sound fair at all.

Fred: I know, I know. And it gets worse.

Howdy Pooch: Oh, no. I can't believe it gets any worse.

Mr. Eric: Fred the dog looked this way and that to make sure there were no humans anywhere near.

Fred: And sometimes, they get a long stick with bristles at the end and they put this weird paste on it, and they stick it in your mouth and rub it around this way and that. They even brush your tongue with it. And no matter how much you try to lick it away, they keep sticking it back on your tooth.

Howdy Pooch: Oh, it's more horrible than I could ever imagine.

Fred: Yes. Yes it is.

Howdy Pooch: Well, that's it. I never want to grow up. I want to be a puppy forever.

Fred: Well, there's a way, you know.

Howdy Pooch: How? Tell me! I'll try anything.

Fred: See that hole.

Howdy Pooch: Oh yeah, it's a deep hole, but I don't see any dogs digging in it. That's weird.

Fred: Just go dig in that hole.

Howdy Pooch: This hole?

Mr. Eric: And Howdy Pooch started digging as quickly as he can.

Fred: No, second hole to the right and dig straight on 'til morning.

Howdy Pooch: Where will I end up?

Fred: We don't know. No doggies have ever come back. But we call it No No Land.

Howdy Pooch: No No Land? That sounds scary.

Fred: No, that's just what the humans say when we dig.

Howdy Pooch: Oh, okay.

Mr. Eric: And Howdy Pooch jumped into the second hole to the right and dug straight on 'til morning.

Fred: Dogspeed, Howdy Pooch.

Mr. Eric: Fred called after him. Howdy Pooch dug deeper and deeper. Suddenly, as his paws pushed aside one last patch of dirt, a beam of sunlight came shooting straight up through the ground!

Howdy Pooch: Well, that's just strange.

Mr. Eric: Howdy Pooch dug and dug and more sunlight streamed through the growing hole and suddenly, instead of digging down, he felt like he was falling up.

Howdy Pooch: Ooooh! Oof.

Mr. Eric: He landed on the shore of a beach. A wave splashed at his little puppy tail.

Howdy Pooch: Hoo hoo!

Mr. Eric: Seagulls flew overhead, but there wasn't a human in sight, nevermind another dog.

Howdy Pooch: Oh, I don't know. Suddenly, I don't feel so good about this.

Mr. Eric: He looked down at the hole, ready to jump right back through, but the wave had washed it away.

Howdy Pooch: Oh no, what was I thinking? Let me just dig here.

Mr. Eric: He dug in the mud, but nothing. It was like the hole had never been there at all.

Howdy Pooch: I'm lost. I'm lost on a lonely island. I don't have a friend in the world. Oh, Fred the dog, you trickster, you.

Patty Pan: If you think he's a trickster, you ain't seen nothing yet.

Mr. Eric: It sounded like a young lady dog. But he couldn't see anybody around.

Howdy Pooch: What's that? Who's there? Please don't play any tricks. I'm lonely and scared.

Patty Pan: [Laughs] We all feel that way when we first get to No No Land.

Mr. Eric: Where was that voice coming from? Hmm. He looked left, right, and all around. He even looked down to see if maybe she was hiding in a hole she dug.

Patty Pan: [Laughs] There's one direction you haven't looked.

Howdy Pooch: Huh?

Mr. Eric: Howdy Pooch craned his nose up into the air with a sniff, and came nose to nose with a bright green schnauzer puppy!

Patty Pan: Hi! Patty Pan, nice to meet you.

Howdy Pooch: Are you—are you—are you flying?

Patty Pan: Of course I'm flying.

Howdy Pooch: Oh, wow. I want to learn to fly, too.

Patty Pan: Okay, follow me! [Zoom!]

Mr. Eric: And off she flew. Howdy Pooch had to run his fastest to keep up with her, but his little puppy legs kept giving out and he'd fall face first into the sand again and again.

Howdy Pooch: Oh, these puppy legs ain't working any good. Slow down, please! I can't run as fast as you can fly.

Patty Pan: Sorry, I'm not much for slow. [Laughs]

Mr. Eric: She flew into the woods and was gone. When Howdy Pooch finally broke through the edge of the trees he looked all around again this time, even up. But no sign of her.

Howdy Pooch: [Sniffs] I'll sniff you out.

Patty Pan: How you gonna do that, Howdy?

Howdy Pooch: How do you know my name?

Patty Pan: It says it on your dog tag, silly.

Howdy Pooch: Oh, well, I don't know, but I seen all the grown up dogs sniffing and they seem to find things real good that way.

Mr. Eric: Patty Pan zipped out of a hole in a nearby tree.

Howdy Pooch: Okay, game's over. Now show me how to fly.

Patty Pan: Okay. First thing's first. You just need some feline dust.

Howdy Pooch: Uh, feline dust?

Patty Pan: That's right! It's the stuff that people who are allergic to cats are allergic to.

Howdy Pooch: Uh, I don't understand.

Patty Pan: Oh, I guess you haven't spent too much time around humans or cats, huh?

Howdy Pooch: No. That's why I came here. So I could just be a puppy forever and never have to worry about that stuff.

Patty Pan: Oh, well, if you want to fly, you're going to need that feline dust.

Howdy Pooch: Okay... where do I find them felines.

Patty Pan: Oh, we're going to have to go to Purring Cove for some of that. Hop on!

Mr. Eric: Patty Pan was almost grown up for a dog, so she was big enough to hold Howdy Pooch. He climbed on her green fur and fwoosh! Off they flew.

Howdy Pooch: Oh! I'm flying, sorta!

Mr. Eric: Howdy Pooch couldn't say anything after that. He had to hold on with his teeth for dear life.

Patty Pan: Hoo! You're pulling out half my fur. Careful, there, Howdy.

Howdy Pooch: Oh, sorry!

Mr. Eric: They flew to another edge of the island where giant boxy ships floated in the sea. Each box had three masts all made of solid cat scratching post material. Fluttering from these masts were large cloth sails. All scratched to tatters.

Patty Pan: Okay, Howdy. I'm going to just let you down on one of these cat ships and you can get some feline dust for me.

Mr. Eric: Now, if Howdy had been a little older or had met a few more cats, he might have known that this was a dangerous endeavor.

Howdy Pooch: Hoo-ee! I'm gonna get some feline dust and I'm gonna learn to fly!

Mr. Eric: Seems like he still had a few things left to learn. Howdy plopped down on the deck of the boxy cat ship and immediately started slipping and sliding all over the place! His paws were too smooth to grip the deck and his nails were too soft to dig in.

Howdy Pooch: Whooaaaaa!

Mr. Eric: He fell right into the side of the ship.

Howdy Pooch: Oh, at least the side of the ship is all soft and furry and makes a nice sound like... [mimics purring noise].

[Record scratch]

That's really cute, I wonder how they got the ship to make that sound?

Mr. Eric: He closed his eyes and sunk into the comfortable side of the ship until... that pleasant sound turned a little less pleasant. Howdy's eyes popped open.

[Angry cat noises]

Captain Crook: Now, see, what are you doing on my ship?

Howdy Pooch: Oh, hi there! Are you a cat or something? You're awfully furry and comfortable to lay on. Anyway, I just want some of your feline dust so I can learn to fly.

Captain Crook: Do you know who I am, kid?

Howdy Pooch: I don't know, you haven't told me.

Captain Crook: I'm Cap'n Crook and you are a stowaway on my crime ship.

Howdy Pooch: Oh. A crime ship. That sounds exciting.

Captain Crook: Well, it would be if we could still sail around but we clawed up all the sails and now we're kind of stuck here.

Howdy Pooch: That's too bad. Anyway, gimme some of that feline dust and I'm just gonna fly away with Patty Pan, and—

Captain Crook: Did you just say Patty Pan?

Howdy Pooch: Sure! She's my friend. She's probably flying around here somewhere. She's really good at hiding.

Captain Crook: Cats! Search the ship. And keep your eyes in the skies. If we can catch birds, we can certainly catch Patty Pan.

Howdy Pooch: Hey, why would you want to catch her for, she's fun!

Captain Crook: A little too much fun, if you ask us. We're grown up cats, which means we don't have much patience for little dogs.

Howdy Pooch: Okay, I'm going to lick you now, and let's snuggle.

Mr. Eric: And Howdy Pooch started licking Captain Crook right on the nose! And he licked his fedora right off his head. And he climbed right inside that fedora hat and snuggled up inside of it.

Howdy Pooch: Hey, I'm being cute right now, why don't you give me a treat?

Captain Crook: Yeah, you are being real cute. I'll give you a treat, all right.

Howdy Pooch: Aaah.

Mr. Eric: Howdy opened his mouth and—splash! Suddenly his mouth was filled with seawater.

Howdy Pooch: [Splutters].

Mr. Eric: Howdy Pooch was doggy paddling for dear life. It seems he'd been tossed in the ocean.

Howdy Pooch: I can't swim all that well, these puppy legs don't really work good.

Mr. Eric: He was already coughing up seawater and more seemed to get in there every time.

Howdy Pooch: Patty Pan, can you give me a hand here?

Patty Pan: [Laughs]

Mr. Eric: But Patty Pan was zipping this way and that all around the cat ship. Kitty criminals were jumping this way and that. Some of them plunked into the sea. Some of them landed on the torn-up sails and crrrrr, scratched the whole way down.

Captain Crook: Catch that dog, you silly mugs.

Mr. Eric: Captain Crook had put his fedora back on and was quickly climbing up to the tallest mast, his eyes locked on Patty Pan.

Howdy Pooch: Patty! Look out! [Gurgles]

Mr. Eric: Howdy was starting to sink. Patty Pan looked over at him and started diving his way just as Captain Crook took a dive of his own. He landed on Patty Pan in mid-air.

Captain Crook: Now I've got you, see?

Mr. Eric: And they were a wild clump of green fur and black and white fur flying in patches as they dove faster and faster, SPLUNK! And splashed right next to Howdy.

Howdy Pooch: [Coughs] Help me, please! My little paws don't work so well.

Mr. Eric: And then, Howdy Pooch was sinking. He thought to himself—

Howdy Pooch: I bet I look really cute all wet like this... my Mom and Dad would probably give me a treat right now.

Mr. Eric: He missed them so dearly. He couldn't even remember why he'd run away in the first place. And suddenly—[Yeaarrghhh]—he felt something long, and slimy wrap around his chest.

Howdy Pooch: Oh, what now?

Mr. Eric: He thought. And he was being pulled. He couldn't tell whether it was up or down, but then he was out of the water. He was being pulled faster and faster.

Howdy Pooch: What is happening? [Coughs]

Mr. Eric: He was coughing up water, and he saw, wrapped around him, not a tentacle, not seaweed, but a pink tongue.

Howdy Pooch: Ew.

Fred: Quit your belly-aching, Howdy.

Mr. Eric: It was Fred! He was soaking wet. His fur was sticking this way and that and he looked none too happy to be standing aboard this cat ship.

Fred: Get up, puppy. It's time we get out of here.

[Various angry cat noises]

Mr. Eric: The cats were closing in from all sides. And another cat suddenly scrambled on board. Captain Crook was back.

Captain Crook: Oh, so you brought a grown up dog, see? Think that's gonna save you?

Mr. Eric: He heard a swoosh and saw Patty Pan zipping around the cat ship, looking a little scratched up but okay.

Howdy Pooch: Hey, Patty! A little help, please?

Patty Pan: [Laughs] Are we still playing? This is fun.

Fred: This isn't play time, Patty.

Patty Pan: Oh... play time's over? Boring. I'll see you guys later! [Whoosh!]

Mr. Eric: And off she flew.

Howdy Pooch: Fred, I don't get it! Why isn't she helping.

Fred: She's been a puppy all her life, Howdy Pooch. All she understands is play time and naps.

Howdy Pooch: Oh, but Fred, there's more important things in the world than play times and naps, sometimes. The world can get scary and serious, can't it.

Mr. Eric: The cats were closing in, their fur raised, their claws extended, their teeth bared.

Fred: They sure can, Howdy. But that's why we grown ups learn to be clever.

Mr. Eric: Suddenly Fred's tongue shot out again, and traced a wide circle around them, pushing all the other cats back until it reached Captain Crook and [slurp!] wrapped him up tight.

Fred: I see you've got some scratches, Captain Crook.

Captain Crook: Yeah, I got some scratches. What's it to you.

Fred: Well, my tongue's good for two things. Eating. And licking. So would you rather be eaten or licked?

Mr. Eric: Captain Crook did have a few scratches. Apparently he and Patty were playing pretty hard. He looked at Fred's big teeth, and he felt Fred's long tongue wrapped around him.

Captain Crook: You drive a hard bargain, Dog. I suppose I'll take that lick.

Mr. Eric: Fred spat out Captain Crook and licked his little scratches until they felt all better. Then all the other cats were closing in again, but this time they were lining up for licks.

Fred: Oh dear, this happens every time.

Howdy Pooch: Fred, you saved us!

Fred: Yeah, and it looks like I'm gonna be pooping cat fur for weeks.

Mr. Eric: He licked all the cats' cuts. He even styled some of their fur. Then he used those sticky clumps of cat fur to stick the sails back together and their ship was moving again. All the cats just kept batting around the wheel of the ship, so Fred finally took the helm with his tongue and steered late into the night.

Howdy Pooch: Where we going, Fred?

Fred: Well, we got a ship full of loyal cat criminals and we can sail anywhere in What If World, so where do you want to go?

Mr. Eric: Fred raised an eyebrow and waited for Howdy to—

Howdy Pooch: Home, please! As fast as we can.

Fred: Oh, that was fast. But have you learned your less—

Howdy Pooch: Yeah, it's okay to grow up because maybe you ain't so cute no more and people don't pay as much attention to you but get real big and strong and smart and you can do all kinds of grown up stuff.

Fred: Oh, uh, yeah, that was the lesson. Okay, you're pretty smart for a puppy, but you still got lots to learn.

Mr. Eric: As they sailed toward the horizon, Howdy Pooch gave one look back at No No Land. He thought he could just make out a green blur zipping around the island. If he weren't so young, maybe he would have understood what he was feeling right then watching Patty Pan zip around far away by herself. He hoped someday

they'd have more adventures together. But when he joined his kitty friends in a nice long nap, he dreamt of home.

The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric:

Wow, I never knew there was a No No Land. Sounds like you can get into a lot of trouble in a place like that. Kids, what do you think Howdy Pooch was feeling as he sailed away from Patty Pan? Why do you think he was feeling that way? And why didn't Patty follow them? Stories often bring up a lot of questions and every answer can make a story all its own. So if you don't have a question for us some week, call in with your thoughts on one of our past stories.

Henry, thank you so much for your great question. I hope you enjoyed your story. Folks at home, if you liked today's story, please rate and review us on iTunes. I know I ask every week, yes. But it is seriously the best way for us to grow and reach new kids and get new questions and tell crazy new stories like today's.

I'd like to thank Karen Marshall, my tireless editor and producer. Craig Martinson, my inspiring theme song writer, and anyone out there in What Is World who's ever rescued a cat, dog, or other animal.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme song plays.]

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