

Podcast: What If World
Episode: 017: What if cars 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.

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 I'm sorry I'm feeling a little under the weather today but I'm going to do my best to give you a great story. So let's listen to Jacob's question.

Jacob: My name is Jacob, and my favorite thing is baseball and my what if question is what if cars could fly?

Mr. Eric: Hey, Jacob. Baseball is my favorite sport, too. I mean, I love them all, but I just played baseball when I was a kid and it's always had a special place in my heart. And what if cars could fly, huh? Well, let's find out?

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Once upon a time, there was a little car. It wasn't the kind of car that many people had or liked. It was called a Pinto. And it was an old car, the color green that you wouldn't really pick out for yourself but if it was the only color car left, I guess you'd buy it.

After years and years of driving around, this Pinto got run down and its owner, Poppa Loo, decided to trade it in.

Poppa Loo: Well, I'm all done with this car, let me get one of those nice sports cars, huh? You know the ones where you can go vroom vroom with 'em? And drive around real fast and your hair goes crazy, I just, oh it sounds like so much fun.

Mr. Eric: So Poppa Loo traded in his old car for a very expensive convertible sports car, and he drove off with the top down.

Poppa Loo: [Laughs] WHEE! Bye, old Pinto! Smell you later!

Mr. Eric: Now the car might have been old and might have even had a lot of miles on it, but still felt like it had a lot of miles left to go.

Unfortunately, nobody else at the dealership felt that way. Months and months went by and nobody bought that old car. So the dealership sent it to Jalopo's workshop where an old man named Jalopo would take apart old cars and use their parts for other cars.

Jalopo: Let me see this old Pinto. Hmm, it's still in very good shape. Let's see those miles. Well, that's a lot of miles, but you still got a lot of miles left in you, huh?

Mr. Eric: No one had ever talked to the car this way. It didn't really know how to respond. It tried its hardest, but all it could do was pop its hood.

Jalopo: Oh, that must be a yes. Now, let's see what else you can do.

Mr. Eric: Jalopo climbed in the old car, took it around for a spin. It handled really well, so he took it on the highway, to see if it could even drive fast. Boy, could that car move. It was little, but it was speedy. The highway ran pretty close by What Sox stadium, an old ballpark where a baseball game was being played.

As they passed by the stadium, they heard a crack! And [whistling]—

Jalopo: Hey, what's that sound, old car?

Mr. Eric: Suddenly, crash! [Breaking glass] A baseball came right through the windshield.

Jalopo: Oh boy!

Mr. Eric: It bounced around inside the car and got wedged underneath the brake!

Jalopo: Uh oh! We can't slow down.

Mr. Eric: Jalopo maneuvered the car as well as he could and the car itself tried really hard to stay safe, too. But traffic was getting worse up ahead. They were gonna crash! The old car thought really hard. Kind of like it had when it popped the hood, and suddenly, its doors all flew open and then close. And then open. And closed. And open and closed faster and faster and faster until they were flapping like wings, and just as it was about to hit the car in front of it—that old Pinto was airborne.

Jalopo: Look at you! I've found a flying car!

Mr. Eric: It flew just long enough for Jalopo to reach under and pull out that baseball. Then it came crashing down back onto the road and Jalopo hit the brakes.

Jalopo: Ooh, that was a close one.

Mr. Eric: They drove home and Jalopo set to fixing up this old car that had saved his life. Before long, it was looking good as new.

Pintopio: Thank you, Poppa, said the car.

Jalopo: Oh, that's okay. Just call me Jalopo. Did you just talk?

Mr. Eric: The car's rearview mirror bent up and down a few times, like a nod.

Pintopio: I've been listening to you this whole time. And, well, I guess I sort of learned.

Jalopo: My goodness. I'm gonna call you Pintopio!

Mr. Eric: Jalopo drove Pintopio all over New What City. But it seemed like whenever he wasn't trying to get somewhere in particular, he ended up right outside What Sox stadium again.

Jalopo: Hey, Pintopio, why are we back here?

Pintopio: I don't know. If not for that baseball, I would have never learned to fly. And you never would have fixed me up like this.

Jalopo: Hey, what do you say we go see a game?

Pintopio: Yeah, that sounds great.

Mr. Eric: The security guard at this gate of What Sox stadium was a tall lady giraffe. She craned her neck low to take a good look at Jalopo and Pintopio.

Giraffe: I'm sorry, boys, but I just can't let you two in.

Jalopo: But I bought two tickets!

Giraffe: I know, I know, but there's no cars in baseball.

Pintopio: No cars in baseball?

Giraffe: That's right. No cars on the field, no cars in the crowd. It's how it's always been.

Pintopio: Does that have to be how it is today?

Giraffe: Sorry little car, I don't make the rules, I just enforce them. Come back when you're not a car, maybe.

Mr. Eric: Jalopo shook his head, turned Pintopio around and drove away.

Pintopio: Maybe I can fly long enough just to take a peek.

Jalopo: No, Pintopio. You've never flown so high before. If you fall from that height, all the way above the baseball stadium, we both are gonna get really hurt.

Pintopio: Poppa, I just, I just want to see one game.

Mr. Eric: Jalopo raised an eyebrow.

Jalopo: I think I got an idea.

Mr. Eric: He turned the car toward a nearby park and found a few kids playing a little league game on a tiny baseball diamond. Poppa Loo was there watching Zach and Zizi play a baseball game.

Poppa Loo: All right, Zizi, knock one out of the park for old Poppa Loo there.

Mr. Eric: Zizi hit the baseball, crack! And started running the bases. Pintopio was so excited it opened and closed its car doors. Opened and closed them again and again, like clapping.

Jalopo: Run little Zizi!

Mr. Eric: Shouted Jalopo, caught up in the excitement.

Pintopio: Yeah! [Beeping] Beep bee-beep bee-beep beep! Go Zizi!

Mr. Eric: Cheered Pintopio. The little car suddenly found that everybody was looking at it. Everybody except Zizi, who finished running the bases.

Poppa Loo: Hi there, little car. I don't mean to be rude, but there's no cars in baseball.

Pintopio: Oh, I know. I heard. I just wanted to watch a little.

Mr. Eric: A few of the other parents closed around.

Parent: What irresponsible person would let their car run loose in a park.

Jalopo: Oh, it's not running loose. I'm taking good care of it. It's never hurt a soul.

Mr. Eric: Zizi was waiting impatiently at home plate.

Zizi: Hey everybody, I just finished running the bases. Couldn't I get a little applause.

Poppa Loo: Well, I'm sorry, sweetheart, but we've got to get this car out of here. It's a menace and a danger, and it kind of looks familiar, but I can't recall from where so I don't trust it.

Zizi: Dad, it's your old car. It's just been fixed up. Let it stay and watch the game. I drove inside it a hundred times and I never got hurt.

Poppa Loo: Huh. Well, I guess it is my car.

Jalopo: Sorry, it's my car now. And it just wants to finish watching your daughter play baseball.

Poppa Loo: Well, all right. As long as you stay off the field.

Mr. Eric: There were a few grumbles from the crowd but mostly everyone just wanted to get back to the game, especially the kids. It was a good game. Zach got a base hit and caught a fly ball. Zizi almost had a double play, never mind her inside the park home run. But at the end of the day, they lost.

Poppa Loo: Oh, phooey, I can't believe we lost again. You two are like the only good players on the team.

Zizi: Dad, that's not fair.

Mr. Eric: Said Zizi.

Zizi: We've just got a lot of young players and we're trying to get better.

Mr. Eric: They were walking by Pintopio just then.

Pintopio: Hey, I thought you all played a great game and I know there are no cars in baseball, but maybe we could just play a quick game.

Mr. Eric: Zach spoke up.

Zach: Yeah, that sounds great.

Poppa Loo: Well, I don't know.

Zach & Zizi: Please?

Poppa Loo: All right, Zach and Zizi, just a quick little game. Little car, you better not drive anywhere near any of us.

Pintopio: Okay, I promise. I've got brand new brakes and rear view mirrors. I'll go slow and safe and I'll play by the rules, I promise.

[Baseball organ plays]

Mr. Eric: Jalopo played catcher. Poppa Loo played pitcher and Zach and Zizi were the two fielders. So Pintopio got the first chance to bat.

Poppa Loo: All right there, little car. See if you can hit Poppa Loo's famous Poppler!

Mr. Eric: He spun his arm around three times fast and whoosh! The ball took off towards Pintopio, who casually swung open a door like a bat and crack! [Whistling]

The baseball took off clean out of sight. Pintopio putted around the bases safe and sound.

Poppa Loo: All right, lucky hit. Now it's my turn to bat. Let's see what you got, old Pintopio.

Mr. Eric: Jalopo tossed a new baseball to Pintopio who caught it on the hood and flicked it up to rest right where its windshield wipers were. Then, with a quick rev of its engines, a little spin, and a swipe of those windshield wipers, the ball was taking off as fast as lightning.

Jalopo: Strike one!

Poppa Loo: What? I didn't even see the ball.

Jalopo: Strike two! Strike three!

Poppa Loo: Huh?

Mr. Eric: A lot of the other kids and parents hadn't left yet. They were starting to come back.

Person 1: Wow, look at this!

Person 2: This car's playing baseball!

Person 3: I want it to pitch out of its tailpipe [Laughs].

Mr. Eric: At that moment, a dog wearing a baseball cap with a big question mark on it came running into the park with a baseball in its mouth.

Dog: [Muffled noises]

Pintopio: Huh?

Dog: Who hit this baseball?

Pintopio: Oh, that was me.

Dog: I've been looking all over for this baseball. I knocked it out of the park a few weeks ago to win a ball game.

All: [Gasp] No! It's Rover Clemens.

Person 3: The first and best dog baseball player?

Person 2: Yeah, we all know who Rover Clemens is, man. Ugh.

Rover Clemens: Yeah, it's me, Rover. Rover Clemens. Someone just hit this ball all the way back into my stadium during a game so I had to run it back here.

Jalopo: But what happened to the game?

Rover Clemens: Oh, I forgot about the game. Oh well, probably lost that one.

Pintopio: I'm sorry, I didn't mean to steal your ball. It crashed through my windshield, well, anyway, you can have it back now.

Rover Clemens: Have it back? Anyone who could hit a baseball that far needs to be a baseball player.

Poppa Loo: Whoa, Rover Clemens, I mean... you're amazing and everything, but, there's no cars in baseball.

Rover Clemens: Well, before me there was no dogs in baseball.

Poppa Loo: True, but...

Rover Clemens: And before Sandy Colfaxmachine, there were no inanimate objects in baseball.

Pintopio: Sandy Colfaxmachine?

Person 3: The greatest baseball printer of all time?

Person 2: Ugh, we all know who Sandy Colfaxmachine is, ugh.

Pintopio: Well, I'm a little big for baseball, and I can sort of fly, which doesn't seem fair.

Rover Clemens: Barry Bonds has about a thousand pounds on you, and Parrot Martinez has been flying around the baseball field for ten years.

Pintopio: Barry Bonds?

Person 3: And Parrot Martinez, the first—

Person 2: Shh. Uh. We already know. Come on.

Rover Clemens: Well, listen, I see a squirrel now, so I gotta go. But you should come to What Sox stadium tomorrow. I'll talk to your manager and see if I can get you a try out.

Mr. Eric: Rover Clemens ran off and the whole crowd stood looking at Pintopio in awe.

Zizi: Hey, Pintopio?

Mr. Eric: Zizi walked up to the car.

Pintopio: I know, I know. There's no cars in baseball.

Zizi: No, no. It's not that. I have a present for you. Or, rather, you do.

Mr. Eric: She climbed in Pintopio's back seat and reached under the cushion. She came out with a beat-up looking What Sox hat.

Zizi: I was pretty sure I lost this down there, so, well, I guess you should have it, now.

Mr. Eric: She put the hat on top of Pintopio.

Zizi: Good luck tomorrow.

Mr. Eric: Baseball teams don't normally do try outs mid-season, but it seemed like by the time Pintopio and Jalopo got to that stadium, everyone in New What City was talking about them. Lots of people were gathered around the stadium. Some of them held signs that said, "No cars in baseball" or "Who could possibly think it'd be fair to have a car that can fly playing baseball." But some people had nice signs that said, "Drive on, Pintopio" and "Break a tailpipe" and "There's a first time for everything."

Pintopio slowly drove past that lady giraffe security guard who gave him a little wink.

Giraffe: Good luck, little guy.

Mr. Eric: And he putted straight out onto the field and right to home plate. The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric:

Wow! All the best men and women and animals and things and flying things all playing in the same league. I want to see that game.

I'd like to thank Jacob for helping us make today's great story. Karen Marshall, my editor and producer, and Craig Martinson, who wrote my theme. And I'd like to give another shout out to KidsListen.org. You can go there or to KidsListen.org/Members to find out about all these other great podcasts for kids. Give them a listen and tell them Mr. Eric sent you.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme song plays.]

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