

Podcast: [What If World](#)

Episode: 21: What if superheroes were my friends?

File Length: 18:01

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. Today we have our very first email question. Oh man, I am so excited for an email question. I was wondering when we would get one because What If World's very own Howverati volunteered to read our first email question. Howverati, you can come into the studio now. I don't know what you were waiting for. I don't know how we're going to read this question without Howverati.

Howverati: Did someone say how?

Mr. Eric: Yeah, I said 'how' several times. It's part of your name.

Howverati: [Singing] I was waiting for a friend to ask how so that I might tell you.

Mr. Eric: Yeah, folks, Howverati is a famous singer in What If World, so you'll have to bear with us for a little minute.

Howverati: [Singing] I think famous singer is an understatement! I'm the most famous person in all the land!

Mr. Eric: That might be a little bit of an overstatement.

Howverati: [Singing] And I stand for what's good and artistic in the world! And I never brag about how great I am.

Mr. Eric: That sounded a little like bragging.

Howverati: How can it be bragging if it's sung in a song?

Mr. Eric: Well, Howverati. Regardless, I would really love you to sit and read Brian's question with us.

Howverati: [Singing] I will take this chair and sit upon it and I will take this microphone and sing.

Mr. Eric: Oh, folks. This might have been a bad idea.

Howverati: [Singing] There are no bad ideas that involve Howveratiiii. Now let's start this party, ha ha ha.

Mr. Eric: Boy. Okay, well, here's the question. Could you read it, please?

Howverati: [Singing] And I quote, Brian asks, "What if superheroes were my frieeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee [clears throat] Sorry, I need a sip of water. Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeennnnndssss!"

Mr. Eric: Are you finished?

Howverati: Quite nearly. [Singing] Question maaaaaaaaaaaaaark.

Mr. Eric: Oh, the punctuation... you don't really have to say, you just imply it by your tone.

Howverati: Whatever you're saying makes very little sense to me. [Singing] If it's a lyric, I sing it. If it's a punctuation point, I sing it. If it's a blot of ink, I sing blooooooot of iiiiiinnk.

Mr. Eric: Folks at home, Howverati has just put on his cape and cued his smoke machine so I think we're going to be stuck here for a while.

Howverati: [Singing] Brian asks what if superheroes were my friends and I say—

Mr. Eric: All right, folks. Enjoy the story. We'll catch you later.

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Once upon a time, Zach and Zizi were running late for the school bus.

Zizi: Zach, come on come on come on, Zach, the bus is here honking its horn, I'm going. I'm going.

Zach: Wait up just a minute. I'll be out in just a—oh.

Mr. Eric: Zach had been trying to tie his shoes all by himself and he just couldn't get it right. He scrambled out after the bus, shoes untied and nearly tripped over himself.

Zach: Wait, wait wait. I'll be right—Oh. Bye, bus.

Mr. Eric: It was a bright and sun-shiny day, but Zach couldn't help but feel bad.

Zach: Oh man, shoe tying is just so hard. Zizi showed me how a hundred times but I just still can't get it.

Mr. Eric: Somehow during that little conversation with himself, it had gotten dark.

Zach: Wait, it didn't take me that long to tie these shoes. Wait, my shoes are still untied. How's it dark?

Mr. Eric: He looked up and saw that he was sitting under the shade of a very wide-brimmed hat. And who was wearing that hat? None other than Hatman himself.

Hatman: Greetings, citizen. I noticed you were crying. You probably need me to arrest a bad guy for you, right?

Zach: Only my shoelaces.

Hatman: All right then, shoelaces.

Mr. Eric: Hatman whipped out a tiny sharp brimmed hat.

Hatman: Time to face the hatarang!

Mr. Eric: The hatarang flung from his hands and cut the shoelaces right off of Zach's shoes.

Zach: Um, well, now my shoes won't stay closed.

Hatman: Hey kid, we're friends, right?

Zach: I guess so...

Hatman: Well, then let me help you out, one friend to another.

Zach: Okay, well. I'm still late for school.

Hatman: No problem, hop in the hatapult.

Mr. Eric: He took a big wicker hat off his back, wove it through a tree branch and pulled the long, heavy tree branch all the way down to the ground.

Hatman: Climb on in, kid.

Zach: Hatman, are you sure I'll be okay?

Hatman: Kid, I've hatapulted over a hundred villains straight to jail. I can certainly hatapult you to school.

Zach: Yeah, but I mean, did any of those villains get hurt along the—waaaaaaa!

Mr. Eric: Zach was hatapulting through the air at over a hundred miles per hour. His untied shoes flew right off his feet. He looked this way and that as he flew through the clouds and suddenly he was coming out of them and there was the school below him. And beside him flew a woman wearing a suit covered in question marks.

Zach: Um, can you help me, please?

Wondering Woman: I was just wondering if you needed help.

Zach: Yeah, I think I'm about to fall down and get really hurt.

Wondering Woman: That's such a long way down, why aren't you flying?

Zach: I can't fly.

Wondering Woman: Well then how did you get up here in the first place, I'm wondering.

Zach: Oh, I've heard of you. You're Wondering Woman.

Wondering Woman: And where is it you've heard of me?

Zach: Uh, maybe we should talk about that after you save me from falling ot my doom.

Wondering Woman: I was just wondering why you hadn't asked me to save you.

Mr. Eric: And suddenly, a giant purple question mark made of pure energy sprung from Wondering Woman's hand and wrapped itself around Zach.

Zach: Ooh, this is cozy.

Wondering Woman: I've always wondered what it would feel like to be wrapped up in the mark of truth.

Mr. Eric: And just like that, they were on the school yard. Wondering Woman had landed gracefully and unwrapped little Zach from her question mark of truth. The school bus was just pulling up. He'd actually beaten his big sister Zizi to school.

Zizi: Zach. Zach, how'd you get here so fast! What happened to your shoes?

Wondering Woman: I'm wondering if this isn't your sister.

Zach: It is. Zizi, this is Wondering Woman. Wondering Woman, Zizi.

Zizi: Oh, wow! I really look up to you.

Wondering Woman: That makes sense. I'm taller than you and I often fly.

Zizi: Well, nice meeting you, I don't want to be late for class. Come on Zach.

Zach: Oh, Zizi, I just need another minute, okay.

Mr. Eric: Zizi shrugged and ran off to class and Zach unslung his backpack and pulled out his pair of emergency Velcro shoes.

Wondering Woman: I was wondering why those shoes were in your backpack and not on your feet.

Zach: I keep them in case I can't tie my shoes.

Wondering Woman: I know how to tie shoes. I can tie 147 different kinds of knots.

Zach: Wow, hatman just sort of cut off my laces, so, maybe you can show me that tomorrow.

Mr. Eric: The school bell rang.

[Ding ding ding ding ding ding ding]

Zach: Oh boy.

Mr. Eric: Zach strapped on his shoes and darted off for class. Wondering Woman was right behind him.

Zach: Um, I think you're too big for first grade.

Wondering Woman: I was wondering what grade you were in.

Hatman: Am I late for home room?

Zach: Hatman, what are you doing here?

Hatman: We're your superhero friends. We've got to protect you.

Zach: Okay. School's usually pretty safe, though.

Mr. Eric: Zach burst into class and ran back to his chair flanked by Wondering Woman and Hatman.

Miss Misty: You are late, again.

Mr. Eric: Said his teacher, Miss Misty. She was an elf-eared teacher with long, gray hair that slowly turned to mist as it reached down to her toes.

Miss Misty: Zach, I'm going to have to mark you tardy, I'm afraid.

Zach: Yes, Miss Misty.

Miss Misty: As the elf-eared teacher brought her pen down towards the attendance sheet, a tiny hatarang shaped like a little square mortarboard shot from Hatman's hand and sliced the tip right off her pen. Ink spilled all over the attendance sheet and all the children laughed.

[Laughing children]

Miss Misty: Now, how did that happen? Oh, nevermind. I've got to get on with my lesson. Everybody just take out your homework, please.

Mr. Eric: Zach has a flash of panic.

Zach: I woke up early to do my homework but I got distracted trying to tie my shoes.

Hatman: That's bad, kid. We're doomed. I'm going to hide under my invisible hat.

Mr. Eric: Hatman pulled something apparently tiny but utterly invisible out of his utility belt, unfolded it a few times pulled it over his head and shoulders and as it went down, he became invisible.

Wondering Woman: I was just wondering if you needed my help. I'm great with questions.

Zach: Oh, please miss, please do whatever you can.

Miss Misty: Now Zach, what is all this ruckus. I assumed you were bringing your superheroes for show and tell but if you cannot keep them quiet, they will have to leave.

Zach: Sorry, Miss Misty. Okay Wondering Woman, just do it quickly please.

Mr. Eric: Zach took his blank homework pages out of his backpack and laid them on his desk. Then that giant purple blast of energy sprung from Wondering Woman's hand again, curling at the edge until it became a giant question mark.

Wondering Woman: Question, reveal yourself to me!

Mr. Eric: An arc of purple lightning shot up from the ground through his desk, through his homework, through the roof of the school and all the way back down again and was gone, leaving on his homework sheet in smoking purple symbols, the answer. $2+3=5$.

The entire class was staring at Zach and Wondering Woman, their mouths agape, their eyes wide. Not a single word on their lips. Zach could just make out Hatman's feet, since he wore baseball caps for shoes, as the superhero tiptoed out of the classroom.

Wondering Woman: I wonder why everyone's staring at us. I only have to do that nine more times and then your homework will be done.

Zach: Um, I think maybe you shouldn't.

Mr. Eric: A piece of ceiling crumbled, falling towards them suddenly and Wondering Woman's mark of truth whipped up and grabbed it.

Wondering Woman: I'm starting to wonder if the mark of truth isn't more of an outdoor tool.

Miss Misty: Now, honey, that is an understatement.

Mr. Eric: Said Miss Misty. The misty tendrils of her hair reached out all over the class.

Miss Misty: Zach, you show up late. You disrupt my class. And then you try to cheat on your homework.

Zach: It's not my fault! It's the superheroes.

Mr. Eric: Miss Misty took another step towards Zach. Her misty hair was covering the whole floor now. Little sparks of lightning appeared within it.

Miss Misty: Well, I don't think those superheroes were using their powers for good.

Wondering Woman: [Gasp!] Are you saying that we're supervillains?

Miss Misty: I'm saying let this boy solve his own problems and let me run my own class.

Mr. Eric: Mist was now swirling and whipping all over the classroom. You could barely see five feet in front of you. And then Hatman was back. He scooped up a big swirl of mist with his invisible hat and Zach could see a clear route out of the class.

Hatman: How dare she call me a supervillain. I'll buy you some time, kid. Go on, save yourself.

Wondering Woman: I'm wondering how this battle will turn out.

Mr. Eric: Wondering Woman's mark of truth shone even brighter. Its purple glow shone through the mist as Zach ran for the door. He turned around for one last look and saw his classmates in a flash of misty lightning and purple glow. They looked scared.

Miss Misty: I don't know what you two are doing, but nobody, and I mean nobody scares my students.

Mr. Eric: Then the mist wrapped the whole classroom up again and Zach couldn't see a thing.

Zach: Wait! Wait, stop, stop stop!

Mr. Eric: He heard hatarangs flying and the whoosh whoosh of the mark of truth being whipped through the air. He even heard little lightning bolts swirling through the mist.

Zach: Stop! Stop fighting. Someone's gonna get hurt.

Miss Misty: Oh my goodness.

Mr. Eric: All that mist suddenly sucked right back into Miss Misty's hair and bright rays of sunlight shot through the hole in the ceiling of the school to illuminate a rather disheveled Hatman and Wondering Woman, who seemed to only be battling with the questions on the chalk board.

Wondering Woman: Sentence, prepared to be diagrammed!

Zach: Hatman, Wondering Woman, I know you were just trying to help me but I made my own mistakes today. I shouldn't have left homework and shoe time to the last minute and once I tried to fix one problem it just seemed like more kept coming up.

Miss Misty: Now, Zach, that's just about the most mature thing I've ever heard out of your mouth.

Zach: Well, from now on, I'm fixing my own problems. Starting with this hole in the ceiling. I'm going to just climb up there and get some plaster and some planks and some bricks and some glue and some...

Miss Misty: Um, Zach? Maybe we could let the superheroes take care of that little part since they blew that hole in the roof in the first place.

Zach: Ah, yeah.

Hatman: Well, kid, here are your shoelaces. Maybe if you ever find your shoes, you can put these back on.

Wondering Woman: And if you need help with your homework, you can ask me and we can wonder over it together. But I'll let you figure out the answer.

Zach: That sounds great.

Miss Misty: You know what would sound even greater? Is if you two superheroes fixed my roof and got out of my classroom.

Hatman: Oh, right, well, here's a start. Sticky hat!

Mr. Eric: Hatman peeled paper off the edge of a big brimmed ranger cap and threw it up to the ceiling where it stuck covering the hole completely.

Hatman: I'll get to fixing.

Wondering Woman: Wondering if you think I don't know how to fix a hole in a roof, Wondering Woman said, looking a little affronted.

Hatman: What? No? Do you?

Wondering Woman: I think I could fix it faster than you.

Hatman: We'll see about that.

Mr. Eric: And the two of them were rushing out of the classroom. Zach got bad marks on his homework that day, and for his attendance. But with a lot of hard work, he learned how to tie his shoes and do his own homework, too, which left plenty of time to play with his new superhero friends.

Wondering Woman: I'm wondering if the hatapult couldn't get you all the way into outerspace?

Hatman: Well, I'd need my interstellar hatsuit in order to survive the atmosphere.

Zach: Guys, I don't think my parents would want me launching into outer space today. But maybe we can play some catch.

Wondering Woman: Why didn't I think of that?

Hatman: All right, catch this razor sharp hatarang! Hyah!

Zach: Aah! I was talking about with this baseball.

Hatman: Oh, that works, too. Toss it here.

Mr. Eric: The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Hey Brian, thanks for emailing in your question. I'd like to thank Karen Marshall for her continued efforts at editing and producing this podcast. I'd like to thank Craig Martinson for his still stellar theme song. And I'd like to thank all you hard-working kids out there. What's something you've had a hard time learning in the past? What's something you did to help you finally get it? Better yet, what's something you've done to teach someone else. Think about it. Maybe it could lead to a great what if question and another awesome story.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme song plays.]

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