

Podcast: [What If World](#)

Episode: 22: What if a tree named Harrigo ate a chocolate that was talking?

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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 today we've got a brand new question from Eden.

Parent: Say, "My name is Eden."

Eden: My name is Eden.

Parent: And what is your question?

Eden: Um, it's about the tree named Harrigo.

Parent: Do you have a question about that tree?

Eden: What if the tree wanted to eat some chocolate and was talking?

Parent: And then say, "Thank you."

Eden: Thank you.

Mr. Eric: Eden, I love that question. You just invented a brand new character and I cannot wait to meet Harrigo.

I also wanted to say that you worked really hard to get that whole question out and I really like the help that you got from your mom, too. That was super cool. You know, I don't want to wait a single second, let's get right into your story.

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Once upon a time in the middle of the deepest, darkest forest in all of What If World there dwelt a tree named Harrigo. Harrigo was a big tree, or at least he thought he was a big tree. He couldn't see any trees bigger than him. And he was a smart tree, or at least he figured he must be smart because he never met a tree that could talk like he could. But most

of all, Harrigo was kind of a lonely tree. Harrigo was also a rather bossy tree. As big as he was, all the creatures in the forest pretty much did whatever he told them to. And what he told them to do most often was to get him chocolate.

Harrigo: All right, critters of the forest, have you got me some chocolate today?

Mr. Eric: Boomed Harrigo as loud as he could.

Harrigo: Well? Where's my chocolate!

Mr. Eric: After waiting quite a while, there wasn't much else Harrigo could do, he saw a distant owl laboriously flapping its wings toward him.

Owl: Whoo. Whoo. Whoooooo. Whoo, Harrigo, there's not a piece of chocolate in the whole forest. We've searched far and wide, all through the night. [Yawns]. Even Whoold owl, I should be asleep during the day.

Harrigo: Just who do you think you are?

Whocilla: Well, I'm Whocilla the owl. You've known me well.

Harrigo: If you can't get me chocolate, Whocilla, then you cannot sleep.

Whocilla: Okay, Harrigo. I'll only take a quick nap and then back to work I'll be.

Mr. Eric: And Whocilla climbed into one of the many holes of Harrigo's old knotted tree trunk.

Harrigo: Oh, you want to sleep then. Well, just try to sleep through my song.

Mr. Eric: And suddenly, all the old knots and holes and cracks started creaking and growning and whistling and not a creature in the forest could get a wink of sleep.

Harrigo: [Whistling in the background] [Chanting] Go go gooo. Harrigo go go gooooo. Harrigo-gogo-gogo-go-Harrigo go gooooo. Harrigo go go goo [continues in background]

[Singing] My name is Harrigo, I love cho-o-cooo so you should all bring me chooo-ooocolate. I am the best there is, I can beat the quiz of where is all the chooo-colate. It isn't in my mouth, so go north and south and find me all the choo-ooo-colate. You will not sleep a wink if I have to think about chocolate for one more seeeeecooooond!

[Still singing, rougher voice] Give it to me!

Mr. Eric: He sang on and on all day long and poor Whocilla didn't get a wink of sleep. Now owls, you might know, are nocturnal. That means they sleep during the day and they're active during the night. So when darkness fell and the moon rose, Whocilla pulled herself out of the knot in Harrigo's trunk.

Whocilla: Whoo-kay. [Yawns] I guess I gotta go and find you some chocolate or you're just going to keep singing like that.

Harrigo: It's either find some more chocolate or find yourself a new tree to nest in.

Whocilla: Whoh. I never thought of that. I could just find a new tree to nest in. Okay. Good-bye.

Harrigo: I-uh, wait. Where are you going?

Whocilla: Well, you're not very nice so I'll be off.

Harrigo: Don't forget to bring back chocolate.

Mr. Eric: Harrigo had never thought that some people might just leave. He was so used to everyone doing exactly what he said.

Harrigo: Uh, ya holes?

Holes: Yes?

Harrigo: Are you listening.

Hole 1: Well, we don't have a choice.

Hole 2: I'm listening.

Harrigo: Can you two holes listen through the forest and hear if there's anyone with chocolate about?

Hole 1: We've already done that. And there ain't a bit of chocolate in the whole forest.

Hole 2: We thought we heard one piece of chocolate but then she told us she certainly wasn't a piece of chocolate at all.

Hole 1: That's true. If she says she's not chocolate, how could she possibly be.

Harrigo: You're saying you heard a piece of chocolate say that it wasn't chocolate.

Hole 1: Yes, what's wrong with your ears?

Harrigo: You are my ears.

Hole 2: Oh, well what's wrong with us?

Harrigo: I don't know! Chocolate! If you are in my forest, I demand that you show yourself.

Mr. Eric: Harrigo whipped his limbs back and forth creating a windstorm in the forest that blew every little leaf and twig up into the air revealing one tiny piece of chocolate just within reach of Harrigo's massive tree limbs.

Harrigo: Well, chocolate, aren't you a good little hider. Are you ready to hide in my mouth?

Mr. Eric: Harrigo stretched the little twigs at the end of its longest limb and snatched that piece of chocolate up shoving it right into his big old mouth.

Harrigo: Well, this is awfully nice.

Chocolate: No, it's not.

[Record scratch]

Harrigo: Excuse me?

Chocolate: It's not nice.

Harrigo: What are you saying?

Chocolate: I don't want to be eaten, so you eating me is not nice.

Harrigo: [Groans] But I want to eat you. So eating you feels nice to me.

Chocolate: Let me ask you something, Harrigo? Have you ever been nice to anyone in your whole life?

Harrigo: Oh, yes. I'm nice to me every time I give myself a bite of chocolate.

Chocolate: What about the people around you? Are you ever nice to them?

Harrigo: What? I don't understand. They get to bring me chocolate. They're doing something nice for me so that should make them feel good. So that's the nice thing I do for them.

Chocolate: Wait, you're saying that because you're letting them be nice to you, that's nice?

Harrigo: Hmmm... When you say it that way, yes. It makes perfect sense.

Chocolate: Harrigo! Niceness isn't just people being nice to you. It's you being nice to them, too.

Harrigo: Uhh...

Mr. Eric: Harrigo was starting to wonder when this piece of chocolate would quiet down.

Harrigo: Well, you're in my mouth and yet I'm letting you talk, so that's nice.

Chocolate: Well, you're letting me talk but you're also eating me and I don't want to be eaten. So I think the letting me talk isn't really enough.

Harrigo: Oh, you've got too many rules about what's nice and what's not nice. Ptoo!

Mr. Eric: And Harrigo spit out that little piece of chocolate. It was the first time he had ever done something like that.

Chocolate: Hmphf! Well, it's about time!

Mr. Eric: Said the little piece of chocolate, now sitting in the dirt and leaves that had settled back down to the ground.

Harrigo: What? Don't you mean, "Thank you, thank you, Harrigo, for being so nice!"?

Chocolate: Um, not eating someone isn't nice. It's just not mean.

Harrigo: Errrr...

Mr. Eric: Harrigo had never done something for someone else before. He thought himself very heroic.

Harrigo: [Whistling in background] [Go go go, Harrigo go go chanting in background].
[Singing] My name is Harrigoooo! I'm quite the herooo! 'Cause I didn't eat the chooo-colate. And 'lest you all forget, I didn't eat it yet, and I might not eat this choo-ooo-colate. You all should sing my praise for days and days and days because I didn't eat thii-iii-sss choo-ooo-ooocolate! Though I will soon!

Mr. Eric: Harrigo was so impressed with himself he thought he deserved a reward so he picked up that piece of chocolate and shoved it in his mouth again!

Chocolate: Excuse me, I think you've eaten me again.

Harrigo: Well, of course! I was nice for the first time ever. I deserved a reward.

Chocolate: Not eating me actually isn't nice. It's just not being mean.

Harrigo: I don't understand. I could have eaten you, but I didn't. You should be thanking me.

Chocolate: No, I'm a thinking, walking, talking piece of chocolate. I don't deserve to be eaten, and I don't want to be eaten. So you should apologize to me for trying to eat me.

Harrigo: Uhhh... why won't you just agree with me? Then we could stop having this argument.

Chocolate: Why won't you stop eating me? Then we can have a discussion.

Harrigo: Ugghhh!

Mr. Eric: And Harrigo plucked the little piece of chocolate out of his mouth and held it out in a big twiggly hand.

Harrigo: I was nice that once so now I get to do what I want and I want to eat you!

Chocolate: You can't just be nice once! If I told you you were nice and then I called you mean names for the rest of my life, would I be very nice?

Harrigo: How dare you even think of calling me mean names. I should eat you right now!

Chocolate: Harrigo. Don't you see my point? Once nice thing doesn't erase all the mean things.

Harrigo: Hmph. Well then how much nice stuff do I have to do?

Chocolate: Well, you should try to be nice as often as possible. Don't you want your friend Whocilla to come back?

Harrigo: Friend? She's not my friend. She works for me.

Chocolate: I mean, she lives in your head. She brings you chocolate all the time. She puts up with your rude attitude. I'd say she was friendly to you for a long time.

Harrigo: Errr... I don't need friends. I have my ears. They always listen to me.

Hole 1: What's that you just said there?

Hole 2: Oh, don't mind him. He's just rambling on again.

Harrigo: Ears!

Hole 1: Well, you've never really asked us how we felt about all this listening.

Harrigo: Ahhh...

Hole 2: Maybe we'd like you to listen to us for a change?

Harrigo: I listen to you all the time. You're my ears.

Chocolate: I think they mean listen to what they want.

Harrigo: You're an awfully pushy piece of chocolate, you know.

Chocolate: Well, if you had to choose between sticking up for yourself and getting eaten, which would you do?

Harrigo: Haha! Oh, no one would ever eat me!

Mr. Eric: Just then, in the deep of night, a lumberjackal stalked through the woods.

Lumberjackal: Hey, yo! You a tree?

Harrigo: Excuse me?

Lumberjackal: You talkin' like a tree, so you must be a tree. Yo, tree. I'm gonna eat you now, all right?

Harrigo: [Shocked sputtering] What? You can't eat me! I'm the oldest tree in the forest.

Lumberjackal: Yeah, and I'm the hungriest lumberjackal in the forest, so uh...

Mr. Eric: Harrigo swung a branch at the lumberjackal and it bit a bit of it off!

Lumberjackal: Hey, yo, that's pretty good. You know, maybe just a few more sticks like that, I'd probably be full.

Chocolate: You know, you grow really fast,

Mr. Eric: Said the chocolate.

Chocolate: It would be really nice if you gave him a few twigs.

Harrigo: [Sputtering] A few twigs?

Hole 1: Yeah, he's got twigs falling off all the time.

Hole 2: You've got a few loose twigs sticking out of me right now. Probably why you don't hear so well out of this ear.

Lumberjackal: Hey yeah, I just take those twigs and uh, be on my way.

Mr. Eric: The lumberjackal started gathering up loose twigs all around Harrigo's roots.

Lumberjackal: Yo, this is great! I'm gonna get to feed my whole family.

Chocolate: See, you're doing something nice.

Harrigo: Uh, listen, Lumberjackal?

Lumberjackal: Yo, what?

Harrigo: I shed old tree limbs about once a month and if you want to come back, why don't you bring your family.

Lumberjackal: Oh, hey. Trees and lumberjackals don't get along. We eat trees.

Harrigo: I know, I know. But I scared away my last friend and I didn't even know it was a friend yet. Now I think maybe I do want friends, after all.

Lumberjackal: Whoa. What are you angling at? I hear Harrigo is only interested in chocolate.

Chocolate: Actually, he's a tree.

Mr. Eric: Said the chocolate.

Chocolate: He gets all the nutrition he needs from the sun and the rain and he's managed not to eat me all night.

Lumberjackal: Hey, you know what, Harrigo? You're all right. I'll come back with the whole pack of lumberjackals and uh, we'll make sure we only eat the fallen twigs, huh?

Harrigo: Well, that's just wonderful. [Laughs] I just wish Whocilla would come back. I was never nice to her. I want a chance to try.

Mr. Eric: But, when morning rolled around, Whocilla the owl didn't come back to nest. Harrigo was crushed. He listened to his ears go on and on. He found out they had very different perspectives, living at opposite sides of his trunk. And he learned a lot from the little candy bar, too. She showed him how all the chocolate he'd ever ate was just sitting there in the middle of his trunk. It was probably why he was full of so many holes.

So, one at a time, he took those chocolate bars out and threw them as far as he could in every direction.

Harrigo: Maybe one day, that chocolate will come back to me and I'll get to try it again. But until then, maybe it'd be nice for someone else to have it.

Mr. Eric: Days and weeks went by. The lumberjackals came with their pack and laughed and goofed with Harrigo. The chocolate bar reunited with a few of her old family members. They'd been inside Harrigo for years!

Even Harrigo's two ears started getting along.

Hole 1: You know, I'm starting to see things from your perspective, even though I can't actually see from your perspective at all.

Hole 2: And I'm starting to think I had a few things backwards, myself. It's been so nice learning from you.

Harrigo: Great, everybody's got their friends and their families. And what do I have?

Mr. Eric: Just then, in a blur of black feathers, Whocilla the night owl lighted on his long, twiggy nose.

Whocilla: Who's this, then? Surely not me old mean boss.

Harrigo: I was hoping maybe a nice new friend.

Whocilla: Oh, we've got a ways to go til then. I was just coming to grab me things. I found a new tree on the other side of the forest. It's quiet there. It doesn't talk at all.

Harrigo: Well, I just wanted to say I know now I-I was never nice to you. But I gave away all the chocolate that I bullied you into getting and I'd just like a chance to be nice to you for a change.

Mr. Eric: Harrigo pulled out a perfectly formed nest. He'd been working on it piece by tiny piece every day since Whocilla left.

Harrigo: I used all me best branches to make this for you. You can just take it with you, now, where ever you go.

Whocilla: Who. That's awfully nice of you but I don't think I'll be taking it.

Harrigo: Oh? Oh...

Mr. Eric: The owl gave him a little peck.

Whocilla: No, silly. I think I'll be leaving it here for when I come visit in a little while.

Harrigo: Oh, well that would be just wonderful.

Mr. Eric: Harrigo suddenly felt like he was being watched and sure enough, the lumberjackals were sitting there looking up at him with what must have been smiles on those long snouts. And the chocolate bars were giggling to themselves excitedly. And even his ears seemed to be whispering back and forth to each other.

Hole 1: He's really turned over a new leaf, hasn't he?

Hole 2: [Laughs] New leaf. Hehe. He's embarking on a new branch.

Mr. Eric: And as the wind blew around Harrigo that night, he creaked and growned and whistled like before.

Harrigo: [Whistling and Harrigo-go-go chant in the background]

Whocilla: [Singing] His name is Harrigo, he's nice now, don't you know, because not he's obsessed with cho-ooocolate.

Hole 1: [Singing] It's not enough to be nice, you've got to try to be all your life! If you want good friends not choo-oo-ocolate.

Chocolate: [Singing] It's really plain to see, he's nice now 'cause of me! He listened to talking cho-ooocolate.

Harrigo: [Singing] Now I'm a changed tree, what's good for you is good for me, but I'd still just like a liiiiittle piiieeeeeeece! Pretty please?

Mr. Eric: The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Oh man. I hope after working so hard to be nice he maybe got a little more chocolate, someday, anyway.

Eden, that was such a good question. Thank you for helping us introduce a new character to What If World. I'd like to thank Karen Marshall, my editor and producer. Craig Martinson, my awesome theme song writer. And all you kids out there who try to be nice every day, not just every once in a while.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme song plays.]

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