

Podcast: [What If World](#)

Episode: 27: What if a cat named Sniff ran away to a house of candy?

File Length: 19:34

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. My name's Mr. Eric, I'm your host and I want to hear Nora's question right away.

Nora: My name is Nora and I like cats and Legos. I'm eight years old. My question is: What if [unclear] cat named Sniff ran away to another [unclear] where he could live in a house of candy? Thank you.

Mr. Eric: Nora, that is a great question. You clearly were very very prepared to ask it and you did a great job. You like Legos. You know, the story last week had something to do with these building blocks that... in What If World, I think are—I think are very, very similar to Legos. I wonder if those characters will make another appearance.

Now, folks at home, I know a lot of you are still waiting on a story to solve that JF Kat question. I know he went missing a few weeks ago, but we've just got a couple stories ahead of JF Kat's saving story. But right now, I want to tell Nora's story to all of you.

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Now in What If World, some cats are normal cats. Some cats are talking cats. Some cats live with humans in human houses. Some cats live with cats in cat houses. I mean, some cats live with aliens in outer space. It's really pretty varied. But this particular cat was a spotted one. His name was Sniff.

Sniff: [Sneeze] Uh... I hate being so sniffly.

Mr. Eric: Now, Sniff was fairly young for a cat, about three years old. And he did have a recurring case of the sniffles so he tended to be an indoor cat.

Cat Mom: Mroaaaw.

Mr. Eric: Said his cat mom.

Sniff: Oh, mom. I just want to go outside and have a little adventure.

Cat Dad: Mroooooaaaa.

Mr. Eric: Said his cat dad.

Sniff: But I haven't been sniffing at all lately.

Cat Mom: Mrrrrrr?

Mr. Eric: Said his cat mom, gesturing to the nice, clean house they kept.

Sniff: Ah, ma.

Mr. Eric: Said Sniff.

Sniff: I'm a talking cat. I know how to read signs and cross roads and how to be safe around strangers. I shouldn't be an indoor cat my whole life.

Cat Parents: Mroaa, Mrrrooo.

Mr. Eric: Muttered his mom and dad, blocking the door.

Sniff: Fine. I'm just gonna take some chicken parmesan and go eat it in my room.

Mr. Eric: And so, off Sniff went. He hadn't taken a single bite of his chicken parmesan when he heard a buzzing outside his window.

Base: You really got us lost this time, Topper.

Topper: Well, it's not like we were built with a map.

Middi: Ooh hoo! We could make ourselves into a map.

Mr. Eric: It looked like a bunch of plastic blocks all interlocked in the shape of a bumble bee? And the blocks seemed to be talking to each other, sitting right on Sniff's window sill.

Sniff: I'm sorry guys, but, I'm allergic to bees so you're going to have to fly away.

Base: Oh, hey. We got a tough cat here, thinks he can tell us what to do.

Middi: Oh, don't you worry, little kitty. We are not real bees. We're made of bricks.

Sniff: Great. It's only Monday and I'm already crazy.

Topper: Well, hello there, Already Crazy. My name is Topper. This is Middi, and the loud one's name is Base.

Base: We shouldn't be talking to this cat. Cats don't really play well with building bricks.

Middi: Oh, I think he seems nice.

Mr. Eric: Said Middi.

Sniff: Well, you all are really lucky you can just fly wherever you want. I'm stuck inside this house forever. It's a nice house for a cat, scratching posts at every corner.

Middi: Oh, and you've got so many toys in your room. You're so lucky!

Base: Hey, the kid says he's unhappy so let's bust him out of here.

Middi: Maybe we could take you with us if you have a map to the candy house.

Topper: Oh yes. We're looking to turn into different things and we want to shape ourselves after this delightful candy house we heard about.

Sniff: Oh yeah. That's right next to the kitty doctor's house. Mom and Dad have to take me there whenever I get the sniffles.

Base: The kid's unhappy and he knows the way. Remember when I shook all you bricks loose from me? Now it's time to shake this cat loose.

Middi: You can't necessarily solve every problem the same way. He's got a pretty nice house.

Base: Kid, don't listen to these bricks. They got plastic for brains. Now, I'm trying to do you a solid. Open the window and come fly away on us.

Sniff: Um... okay. Just let me finish my chicken parmesan.

Mr. Eric: But just then, he heard his parents outside his bedroom door.

Cat Parents: Meow? Meomeow?

Sniff: Oh, no time for that. Let's go.

Mr. Eric: Sniff opened up his window, climbed on top of that giant bumble bee and off they flew towards the candy house. As they flew away, he could hear in the distance, "Mrrrrroooow."

His parents sounded upset.

Sniff: Well, they shouldn't have kept me cooped up like that. It's their fault.

Topper: That's not entirely fair, kid.

Base: Hey, don't listen to Topper. Tell me which way we're supposed to turn now.

Sniff: Just 45 degrees to the left and then it's pretty much a straight line.

Base: 45 degrees. What does this kid, think I'm some kind of scientist.

Middi: It's okay, I've got this.

Mr. Eric: Said Middi. She was a pretty big block and made up an entire wing of the bumble bee by herself so she steered them all the way towards a big candy house.

Have you kids ever seen a magic bar before? It's like chocolate and cookie and caramel and coconut all stacked on top of each other. Well, that's what these walls were made out of. It had donuts for windows, pie crusts angling up to make a triangular roof. It had a half-melted chimney made of marshmallow. Probably a design flaw, but it looked delicious.

And the little spotted cat went up to knock on the dark chocolate door.

[Knocking]

Sniff: Hi, I came to live in this house so I can come and go as I please and just eat candy to live off of.

Mr. Eric: No one answered but the door did slide open a little bit. [Creaking]

The floor was shiny, hard and caramel colored. Like peanut brittle without the peanuts.

Sniff: Wow, this is a nice place. I don't know what to eat first.

Mr. Eric: The bumble bee of building bricks wasn't eating anything, but flew around studying every single item in the house.

Middi: Ooh, I think we could turn into this licorice table.

Base: Naw, I want to turn into this little striped mint clock.

Top: Well, obviously, the nicest thing of the house is the candy crystal chandelier, that's what we're turning into first.

Sniff: Hey guys? Where do you think everybody is?

Mr. Eric: Asked Sniff.

Base: How should we know, kid? Listen, we took you here. Our job's done.

Middi: Besides, if there's no one here, you've got the whole place to yourself. Maybe we should just start being the house first, like a little mini version of the house.

Topper: Oh, excellent idea, Middi.

Base: I guess I'm out-voted on this one.

Mr. Eric: And the brick-made bumble bee flew outside and started coming apart and reforming into a tiny replica of the candy house. But Sniff didn't stay to watch. He went into the kitchen. It had another dark chocolate door leading in, but this one had a little fruit leather flap at the bottom that Sniff could just walk right through.

Sniff: Wow. That's really convenient for a cat.

Cats: Mroooow, mraaaawww, [hissing].

Mr. Eric: Inside the kitchen, lying all over the peanut brittle floors and the hard candy counters, were cats.

Cats: Mrrrrrrroowwww.

Mr. Eric: A striped cat was lying right next to Sniff and pawing at him.

Sniff: What happened to all you?

Cat: Mrrr...

Mr. Eric: It actually seemed to be pawing at something right beside Sniff. Oh. The little spotted cat looked beside him to see a half-empty water bowl.

Sniff: Oh. I'll just push this closer to you.

Mr. Eric: But the striped cat just batted the water bowl away.

Cat: Mmmrrrr!

Mr. Eric: Sniff looked again. Behind the water bowl was a towering hot fudge sundae. All the cats started meowing and purring again.

Cats: [Making various distressed cat noises]

Sniff: Oh, that's why none of you can move. You've eaten too much. [Sneeze]

Mr. Eric: The peanut brittle under Sniff's feet were making his paws awfully irritated.

Sniff: I mean, I like a hot fudge sundae as much as the next cat, but shouldn't you all go out and get some exercise?

Cats: [Cranky cat noises and hisses]

Mr. Eric: The striped cat seemed to pull itself up from the ground for a split second, and then flopped back down to the ground.

Sniff: Wow, this ice cream sundae must be really delicious.

Mr. Eric: Sniff walked over to the sundae and grabbed at a big cluster of brownies and nuts all clumping together with whipped cream. But when he pulled on it, it was like the sundae opened up. It was a refrigerator! And inside there was even more candy and a few more cats.

Cats: [Shuddering, cold cat noises and sneezes] [Eating noises]

Sniff: You cats have it made.

Mr. Eric: Sniff hardly realized how much candy he'd eaten until he found himself lying right beside that striped cat.

Sniff: Okay [sniffles] Now that I'm nice and full, I'm going to go exploring. [Snoring]

Mr. Eric: But Sniff had fallen fast asleep after all that unhealthy food. He dreamt of his parents meowing at the night sky. He dreamt of the bumble bee building blocks trying to lift him up. But he was just too heavy so they left him behind and when he woke up, mrow? He realized, he hadn't been dreaming all of that.

[Record scratch]

Days had gone by and all he'd done was sat around eating candy with all these other cats. His paws were red and swollen from the peanut brittle and his nose was running like crazy from all this unhealthy food.

Sniff: Um, is it next Monday, already? Feels like a Monday, ugh.

Mr. Eric: His allergies were just too bad to stay in this place another minute. He started dragging himself out. It took him half the day just to get the few feet away to the door. All the building bricks were gone. It looks like they'd had their fun and flown away.

Sniff: I know my mom and dad are looking for me. I've heard them meowing every night. But I can't get all the way back there.

Mr. Eric: Kids at home, do you remember what this candy house was next door to, by any chance?

Sniff: Just a few more [sneezes] feet...

Mr. Eric: But Sniff collapsed on the sidewalk, he couldn't drag his big, furry, kitty belly even one more step. The little spotted cat wasn't so little anymore.

Wee-oo wee-oo [Sirens]

Sniff saw an ambulance driving up to the doctor that lived next door.

Dr. Doolots: All right.

Mr. Eric: Said Dr. Doolots, snapping up her perfectly white lab coat and rushing towards the ambulance.

Dr. Doolots: What do we have here?

Cat: [Distressed cat noises]

Dr. Doolots: I'm sorry, I'm new to town, I don't speak Cat.

Mr. Eric: But Sniff understood.

Sniff: Oh, he says there's a brick based bumble bee back there that hurt its wings trying to carry something too heavy.

Mr. Eric: Dr. Doolots looked down at Sniff.

Dr. Doolots: Oh my goodness, you poor thing! Someone's been over-feeding you.

Sniff: Yeah, I have.

Mr. Eric: Dr. Doolots picked up Sniff the cat in one arm and scooped up the broken building block bee with her other.

Dr. Doolots: Well, if you can tell me what's wrong with all these other cats I keep finding, that'd be a big help.

Sniff: [Sniffles] Well, most of them just ate too much at the candy house next door.

Dr. Doolots: I told the mayor he should have made that just a candy museum.

Sniff: And those building bricks were trying to save me so it's my fault they hurt their wings.

Dr. Doolots: Kid, you can't do lots if you focus on the problems. Let's try getting better.

Mr. Eric: And she stuck a bowl of something fishy smelling in front of him.

Sniff: What is this? Medicine?

Dr. Doolots: Basically, yes. It's healthy food and I suggest you eat it.

Mr. Eric: Begrudgingly, Sniff ate the fishy mush and soon was starting to feel better. A little more energized. Meanwhile Dr. Doolots was going from one patient to the next. Giving this one healthy food, giving that one a little medicine. Helping build the bricks together so they weren't so broken anymore.

Sniff: Wow. You really earned your name.

Dr. Doolots: Well, that doesn't mean I want to do it all by myself, Sniff. Keep helping.

Mr. Eric: So Sniff started helping, too, and the more he helped, the more he felt better. He even went next door to the candy house and started getting all the other unhealthy cats over and feeding them better and getting them some exercise. By the end of the day, he was exhausted. But there was still one place he had to go.

Dr. Doolots: That was a very busy day. Thank you so much for your help.

Base: Ah, geez, kid. Back and wings are finally starting to feel better.

Topper: My goodness, I've never lifted a cat so heavy.

Middi: Well, yeah, we technically didn't lift him at all. We basically fell apart.



Sniff: Um, Dr. Doolots?

Dr. Doolots: Yes?

Sniff: I know you're tired and you worked even harder than me, but is there any way you could give me a ride home.

Dr. Doolots: What do you think I am, a taxi service? I called your parents three hours ago, they're waiting in the lobby.

Mr. Eric: Sniff was so nervous to see his parents. They didn't have a word to say to him, or meow, or purr, or even sniff. They just walked the long way home with their son in silence.

Sniff: Mom? Dad? I'm sorry I ran away.

Mr. Eric: The mom and dad cat traded a look but didn't say a word.

Sniff: Oh...

Mr. Eric: As they were walking up to the door of their house, Sniff had had just about enough of the silence.

Sniff: Listen, I'm sorry and I'll never run away again. But you shouldn't have kept me locked away for so long. I helped people today even though I had my sniffs and my allergies and everything.

Cat Parents: Mrooow. Mrow.

Sniff: And I'll never run away again, but I do want to go outside again and you gotta understand that.

Mr. Eric: But his mom and dad just walked to the door and sat at either side of it.

Sniff: Oh, what? So now you're going to not even let me in the house?

Mr. Eric: But then he saw it. It had been hard to make out in the dark, but while he was gone his mom and dad had installed a little flap at the bottom of the door.

Sniff: Oh.

Mr. Eric: He went through the little flap and mom and dad followed after.

Cat Parents: Rrrrr? Mrrr.

Sniff: Oh, Mom and Dad. Thank you so much for understanding.

Mr. Eric: Now, don't get me wrong. Sniff the cat was still grounded for a solid month, but he did get to go out almost every day. He'd walk all the way to Dr. Doolot's office and help care for the patients there. Then Topper, Middi, and Base, the three building bricks would give him a ride home. But every now and then they'd swing by the candy museum for a quick visit.

Base: Hey, kid, grab me a cherry in there, would ya?

Topper: Now, get one of those sugar diamonds.

Middi: Don't you listen to them. You get a whole dark chocolate door off the hinges, okay?

Sniff: No, I'm just going to see if any cats got lost in here again.

Base: Doesn't mean you can't grab us some candy.

Topper: I'm just talking about a two carat candy diamond.

Middi: Well, maybe just half a door, then.

Mr. Eric: The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Oh, Nora, I love when our What If questions lead us to whole new characters and lands. That cat land was pretty cool.

I'd like to thank Nora again for doing such a great job asking her question. You were so well-prepared. And Karen Marshall for her awesome editing and producing. And Craig Martinson for his great theme song, and all you big kids out there who know you've always got to check in with your parents before leaving the house.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme song plays.]