

Podcast: [What If World](#)

Episode: 35: What if humans found an alien spaceship and what if houses built themselves?

File Length: 20:44

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 I am going to answer two questions with one story! When we do live What If World stories, I often put two, three, four, even five what if questions together to make one super awesome wacky story.

And since I've got so many questions from you kids that I want to answer, this is like the only way I can get caught up. So, and Emmett, thank you so much for your questions. We're going to start with Sho's because he said his first.

Oh, and if I'm pronouncing your name wrong, I really apologize. I really love your question though. Let's hear it.

Sho: Sho.

Parent: What do you like?

Sho: Aliens.

Parent: You like aliens. What's your question?

Sho: What if humans found an alien space ship, and [unclear] an alien space ship?

Parent: What if astronauts found an alien space ship?

Sho: Bye!

Mr. Eric: All right. What if humans found an alien space ship? Really cool. And it wouldn't be much fun finding a space ship if you didn't get to use a space ship at some point. Hmm.

Okay, now let's listen to Emmett's question. I hope they really make sense and tie together super well. Let's see.

Emmett: Hi, my name is Emmett. I like building things and I want to know if houses built themselves. Thank you, bye.

Mr. Eric: Emmett, that is an awesome question. What if houses built themselves? I've never had a thought like that. Well, until you said it, that is. Okay. So what if houses built themselves and what if humans found an alien spaceship? Oh, man. Those two questions don't seem related at all, do they? Can any of you folks at home guess how our story is gonna go today? I don't even know yet. Let's find out.

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: In the sleepy little town of Howville, Zach and Zizi lived in a tiny cottage.

Zach: Zizi,

Mr. Eric: Said Zach.

Zach: Do you think someday we'll live in a house big enough that we each get our own bedroom?

Zizi: I don't know, Zach.

Mr. Eric: Said Zizi.

Zizi: I mean, houses are really expensive, but hey. At least we live right next to the park.

Zach: You're right, Zizi, the park's got all the space we need.

Mr. Eric: So Zach and Zizi squeezed out of their tiny room and rushed out the door.

Zach: Bye, Mom! Bye, Dad!

Zizi: We're going to the park Mamma Jamma and Poppa Loo!

Mamma Jamma: All right, you two. Play safe. Don't talk to strangers.

Mr. Eric: Said Mamma Jamma, and the kids were out the door.

Zach: First one to the park is a rotten zombie!

Mr. Eric: Shouted Zach, and he took off at a sprint.

Zizi: Aw, Zach, I want to be the zombie.

Mr. Eric: And Zizi caught up in a flash, being the big sister and all. Zizi had to slow down for just a second to open the wooden fence, but Zach slipped through a little gap between the posts and turned around to celebrate.

Zach: Zizi, I won! I'm the zombie!

Zizi: Uh-huh,

Mr. Eric: Said Zizi, looking over Zach's shoulder.

Zach: Oh, wipe that look off your face, Zizi. The little brother can win every once in a whi—

Mr. Eric: But Zizi just kept staring over Zach's shoulder and into the park.

Zach: Zizi, what's wro—whoa.

Mr. Eric: Where the big wooden playground apparatus used to be now stood an equally large house.

Zach: Zizi, was that house there yesterday?

Zizi: Zach, of course it wasn't there yesterday. We were there yesterday, playing on the apparatus.

Zach: Hey look, remember how I wrote my name in Sharpie on the slide?

Zizi: Yeah, Zach. You shouldn't have done that. That's graffiti. Maybe that's why they tore down the whole apparatus.

Mr. Eric: But Zach was already shaking his head.

Zach: No, no Zizi. Look at the door.

Mr. Eric: The door was made out of the same yellow plastic the slide had been and just in the bottom right corner, you could make out the word, Zach, written in black Sharpie.

Zach: It's like the playground transformed into a house.

Zizi: Oh, Zach, don't be silly. We just got a new neighbor, that's all.

Mr. Eric: And Zizi went up to knock on the yellow, plastic door.

Zach: But Zizi, strangers!

Zizi: Zach, they're our new neighbors and Poppa Loo's sitting on our little porch reading the paper. He can see us. Hi, Poppa Loo!

Mr. Eric: From across the street, Poppa Loo looked up from his paper.

Poppa Loo: Oh hi, there, Zizi. Play nice, okay. Don't interrupt Daddy.

Zizi: See Zach? It's fine.

Zach: Okay, then I'm knocking first, hahaha! [Knocking]

Mr. Eric: And they both knocked at the same time. But no one answered.

Zizi: Um, hello. We're your new neighbors. I'm Zizi and this is my little brother Zach.

Zach: Hi, come on let us in, we want to meet you.

Zizi: Zach, that's rude.

Zach: So is not answering your door.

Mr. Eric: And Zach turned the plastic doorknob and the door was unlocked. The bright yellow door swung inward revealing a big, empty house with a thin layer of mist covering the floor.

Zizi: Zach, you can't open the neighbor's door.

Zach: Aw, Zizi. Dad's right across the street, remember?

Zizi: Okay, well, we need to ask him for permission before—

Zach: Hey, Dad, can we go inside this strange house that popped up overnight.

Poppa Loo: Okay, you two. Play nicely.

Mr. Eric: Mumbled Poppa Loo, never looking up from his paper.

Zach: See, it's fine.

Mr. Eric: Said Zach, ducking inside the house to disappear in a swirl of mist.

Zizi: Zach, where did you go?

Mr. Eric: And Zizi ran in after him, the mist swirling about her.

Zizi: Zach, where are you? [Echo: Zach, where are you?]

Mr. Eric: And he heard her voice echo back.

Zach: Over here, Zizi. [Echo: Over here, Zizi.]

Mr. Eric: And again, the echo. She saw the door close behind her and the mist start to rise inside the house.

Zizi: Zach, this house is weird. [Echo: Zach, this house is weird.]

Zach: Yeah, and echo-y. [Echo: Yeah, and echo-y.]

Mr. Eric: She finally found her brother. The mist was already up to the top of his head and she could barely see through it. He was standing in front of a big fireplace.

Zach: Watch this.

Mr. Eric: Said Zach, and the bricks of the fireplace moved together like a mouth, saying the same words.

House: [Echoing Zach: Watch this.]

Zizi: That's freaky.

Mr. Eric: Said Zizi, and the fireplace repeated:

House: [Echoing Zizi: That's freaky.]

Zach: I kind of wanted to live here, but now I'm not sure.

Mr. Eric: Said Zach, and the house said:

House: [Zach's voice: I kind of want to live here and now I'm sure I do.]

Zizi: Zach, that's not what you said.

Mr. Eric: And the house said:

House: Of course that's not what Zach said.

Zach: Zizi, I think it's learning!

Mr. Eric: And the house said:

House: Zach and Zizi, I am learning.

Zizi & Zach: Wow!

Mr. Eric: And the house said:

House: Wow.

Mr. Eric: Zach suddenly launched into a barrage of questions.

Zach: Hey, are you a house from outer space? Did you build yourself? What are you, like an alien? And how are you even here? Where'd you come from? And, and, and—

House: I am a house that built myself. I do not know where I am from. Maybe from outer space. I do not know how I got here.

Zizi: Well, what's the last thing you do remember? Did you crash land in the playground?

Zach: Like, you used to be a big, shiny space ship?

House: I remember my shiny pieces being scattered all over this playground and pieces of the playground, too. Maybe I did crash.

Zach: Oh, I'm sorry. I know how lonely and scary it can be being in a new place.

House: I'm not scared. And I am not alone.

Zach: That's right, House. You've got me and Zizi and we're going to keep you company.

[Cracking sounds]

Mr. Eric: There was a sound outside like a tree falling.

Zach: House, what was that?

House: Don't be scared. You are safe.

Mr. Eric: But Zach and Zizi ran to the window of the house anyway, and they saw half the trees in the park falling over.

[Trees cracking and falling]

Zach: Howie what's happening?

Howie: Howie. Yes, I like that name. Now you don't need to be scared for Howie. Howie isn't lonely anymore.

Mr. Eric: Zach and Zizi watched in disbelief as all those trees seemed to shave themselves down and chop themselves up and shape themselves into new houses.

Zizi: What kind of alien are you?

Mr. Eric: Asked Zizi.

Howie: I don't know. Probably some kind of house alien.

Mr. Eric: Three more houses had already popped up in the park and they heard more trees falling down at a distance.

[Trees creaking and thudding to the ground]

Zizi: Howie, don't you think you have enough?

Howie: I don't know what is enough.

Zach: Well, you've got four houses already. And in my family, it's just me and Zizi and my mom and dad. That's four.

Zizi: Yeah, Howie. I don't mean to offend, but you should probably stop making houses now.

Howie: I have stopped making houses.

Mr. Eric: Said Howie.

[Trees creaking and thudding]

Mr. Eric: But Zach and Zizi could plainly hear more houses being built all around the park.

Zach: No you haven't. You're chopping down more trees and building house after house. There aren't going to be any trees left in the whole town.

Howie: But I'm not making those houses, my children are.

Zizi: Aren't your kids a little young to be making houses of their own?

Mr. Eric: Asked Zizi.

Howie: My children do not wish to be lonely. This is just what houses do.

Mr. Eric: And still, they heard the sounds of building. Zach and Zizi ran out of Howie the house. They looked out over the park to see over a dozen houses and more being built by the minute. The whole park had been

stripped of every piece of wood, every fence, every tree, every stone in the ground. Even the little forest next door was starting to get chopped down.

Zach: Will you ever stop?

Howie: We will stop building when we are not lonely.

Zizi: I think I know just the thing.

Mr. Eric: Said Zizi, and whipped out her cell phone. Meanwhile, all the way over in Pirate land, Peter the realtor was plying his craft.

Peter: Well, you see here, Mr. Lobsterpus, if you live in his particular lobster trap, then you don't have to be afraid of any of the other lobster traps. It's a win-win.

Mr. Eric: And the eight-legged lobsterpus said:

Lobsterpus: [Clicking and garbled noises]

Peter: Sure it's a nice neighborhood. Plenty of scallops, not a lot of sharks. But listen, I'm running out of oxygen in my tank, so.

[Ring ring! Cell phone ringing]

Mr. Eric: Peter the realtor's cell phone rang.

Peter: Oh, it's so hard to answer these in the plastic bags.

Hello?

Zizi: Peter.

Mr. Eric: Said Zizi.

Zizi: We've got a problem here in Howville. There's dozens of empty houses here and more are being made by the minute.

Peter: Oooh. Sounds like just my kind of problem.

Mr. Eric: And Peter the realtor used his oxygen tank to [Hissing] blast him right out of the ocean, leaving Lobsterpus shaking its eight long wiggly claws at him.

Lobsterpus: [Muttering and clicking]

Mr. Eric: By the time Peter reached Howville, the houses were sort of running out of stuff to build with. There were about 30 houses in all, built in a spiraling out pattern until they took up the whole park in a little mini-neighborhood of their own.

Peter: Now Zach and Zizi, please tell me you didn't plan this neighborhood. No one wants to live at the center of a giant spiral. I mean. I mean, it just looks like scifi alien nonsense.

Zach: Well, you're not far off, Petey.

Mr. Eric: And they took him inside to meet Howie.

Howie: Greetings, Peter the Realtor.

Peter: Oh, so you're like some kind of magic house?

Howie: More like scifi alien nonsense, I believe.

Peter: Oh, you heard that. Well, sorry. I meant no disrespect, but a house is a place where a person wants to live and be comfortable and have convenience.

Howie: Convenience?

Peter: Aye, first off. Your house is empty.

Howie: I'm not empty. I'm full of mist.

Zach: Yeah, um... most people don't like living in mist.

Howie: Hmm. Interesting. Let me just burn away this mist, then.

Mr. Eric: All the windows shot open and the house started turning red hot!

Peter: Ooh, aah! What are you doing?

Mr. Eric: Zach and Zizi jumped into Peter's arms and he danced around until his pirate boots melted, and finally all that mist had steamed away. Petey put the kids down and then sat down, himself, to take off his half-melted boots.

Peter: Oh, that's another thing I had to learn the hard way. People don't like houses that can cook them.

Howie: You're kidding.

Peter: No, no, that's the truth. Soup cauldrons, active volcanoes, nobody wants to live in them.

Howie: But this is just the way we built ourselves.

Peter: I know, I know, but the customer's always right and it's going to be hard to sell you, what with the misting and the melting and the weird alien voice.

Howie: Sell me?

Peter: Yeah, I mean, I'm probably going to have to sell you at half price.

Zach: Ooh, half price?

Zizi: Maybe Poppa Loo and Mamma Jamma can actually afford this house.

Peter: So, Howie. What were you hoping to get for yourself.

Howie: I was hoping to get a family to live here.

Peter: Okay, well. If we put you on the market at 250, you'll probably move pretty fast.

Howie: Would I move faster if you put me at 0?

Peter: Of course you would. I mean.

Howie: Then I would like to cost 0.

Peter: But, um. This is my job and I need to earn a living by helping to sell you.

Howie: One of my children could turn itself into a pirate ship house for you.

Peter: Huzzah! You've got yourself a deal, Howie.

Mr. Eric: And Peter the realtor called every client he knew. Everyone that was still looking for a house and got them to move to Howville.

Zed: Brains brains brains.

Mr. Eric: Said Zed the Zombie, unpacking his station wagon.

Zizi: I know!

Mr. Eric: Said Zizi. I'm so glad we get to be neighbors.

Cackula: And my house has SPF 1000 windows. No more sunburns for Cackula, ha ha ha ha!

Mr. Eric: But as everybody got into their houses, they realized Peter the realtor had been right. They were packed really close together and now there was no park for any of them to enjoy.

Zach: Zizi, I wish we hadn't picked the middle house in the spiral.

Zizi: I know, Zach. It takes me 10 minutes to ride my bike out of here. I get really dizzy in the process.

Mr. Eric: They were both riding their bikes along the winding street, around and around and around as the spiral got bigger.

Zach: It's just going to take so much longer to get to school now.

Mr. Eric: Said Zach. And then they heard a [Rushing sound] from above. They looked up and saw Howie the house floating above them.

Zizi: Whoa. Howie.

Howie: I heard you didn't want to be late for school.

Mr. Eric: Said the flying house.

Zach: Um, so did you, like, remember how to be a space ship or something?

Howie: Huh? What do you mean?

Zizi: Oh, it's just that houses in What If World usually aren't rocket powered.

Mr. Eric: Said Zizi.

Howie: Oh dear. Peter's never going to be able to sell all of us now.

Mr. Eric: And at that very moment, Peter flew by in his very own self-built pirate ship space house.

Peter: This is the greatest day of my life!

Zizi: Um, I think he'll be okay, Howie.

Zach: Hey, Dad, can you throw us down a ladder?

Mr. Eric: Poppa Loo was sitting on their new front porch. He didn't even seem to realize they were flying.

Poppa Loo: Okay, kids. Have fun. Play safe.

Mr. Eric: And he turned the page of his newspaper, kicking down a little rope ladder for the kids to climb. The kids climbed up and back inside the house just as it took off towards school.

Mamma Jamma: Zach. Zizi. What are you doing back here in the house? You're gonna be late for school.

Zach: No, it's okay, Mamma. Howie's taking us to school today.

Mr. Eric: And Mamma Jamma went to look out the window and saw all the houses taking off out of the park and flying in their own separate directions.

Mamma Jamma: Zach, Zizi. What happened to all the trees in the park?

Zizi: Ma, we told you. The houses built themselves and they chopped down a lot of the trees to do it.

Mamma Jamma: Well, new house or not, you are planting two trees for every single one that got chopped down.

Zach: Aw, Ma.

Zizi: Mamma Jamma....

Mamma Jamma: No, it's the right thing. Wouldn't you say, Poppa Loo?

Poppa Loo: Huh? Oh sure, yeah. Have a good day at work, honey. Play safe.

Mr. Eric: And Poppa Loo turned the page of his paper.

Mamma Jamma: And we only have to buy about 500 saplings, right Poppa Loo?

Poppa Loo: Okay, yep. You got it.

Mamma Jamma: And of course, you're going to help the kids plant every single one, now aren't ya?

[Record scratch]

Mr. Eric: Suddenly, Poppa Loo looked up from his newspaper.

Poppa Loo: Uh, say what now?

Mamma Jamma: The 500 saplings. It's a lot better of a deal than buying a whole new house, wouldn't you say?

Mr. Eric: Poppa Loo suddenly folded up his newspaper and darted for the door.

Poppa Loo: You know, honey, I just realized I'm running late for work, so I'm gonna just—aah!

Mr. Eric: He ran right out of the flying house. Fortunately, they were pretty close to the school and he'd fallen face first in the schoolyard.

Poppa Loo: Uhh... he-ll-lp?

Mr. Eric: The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Oh, Sho and Emmett, I hope you liked your story. I wasn't sure how it was gonna come all together but I'm really happy I had two super cool questions to help me build an awesome story for you.

I'd like to thank Karen Marshall, my editor and producer, Craig Martinson who wrote and performed our awesome theme song. Jason O'Keeffe for our rad new artwork, and all you kids at home who ever planted a tree or flower or plant of any kind and helped it to grow.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme song plays.]