

Podcast: [What If World](#)

Episode: 39: What if ninjas could turn into animals?

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Transcription by Keffy

Mr. Eric: Oh, well, do you want me to introduce the podcast? Do you think that would be fun?

Teddy: Yeah? Yes.

[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: Okay. All right, ready? Hey there, folks, and welcome back to What If World, the show where your questions, and wait. Your questions and what, Teddy?

Teddy: Ideas!

Mr. Eric: Oh! Where your questions and ideas inspire fiddle faddle foof.

Teddy: [Laughs] No! Where—

Mr. Eric: Inspire off the—what is it?

Teddy: ... the cuff stories.

Mr. Eric: Oh, inspire off the cuff stories. Thank you, Teddy.

Teddy: Yeah, your brain needs a new gear. You lost a gear in it at work. You left it behind in the machines.

Mr. Eric: Teddy, I think that you are ready to host this podcast.

Teddy: Behind in the brain machine.

Mr. Eric: You are so right, man. You've got my number, Teddy. I've got to say. Well, Teddy, I'm really excited for you to be my very first kid guest ever. Is that kind of cool?

Teddy: Uh, yeah!

Mr. Eric: And this is a live episode, right? People are going to hear it later but you and I are talking live so they'll see how it really works. And Teddy, do you know where I got the idea for What If World?

Teddy: No...

Mr. Eric: Well, it was actually from having story time with you. Isn't that cool?

Teddy: Yeah.

Mr. Eric: It's really cool for me. So, folks at home, if you haven't guessed, this guy's Teddy. I've never met him before, I have no idea who he is. But he called me randomly, so I figured I'd put him on the podcast.

Teddy: [Unclear] You know who I am!

Mr. Eric: Oh, that's right.

Teddy: Seriously. Do you?

Mr. Eric: Oh, I'm sorry, guys. This is my Uncle Teddy. I—

Teddy: No! I'm your well, kind of your brother.

Mr. Eric: [Laughs] You, man, if I had a brother like you, I'd be a very lucky guy. You are my nephew. So, I heard... your mom told me that you had a what if question. Is that true?

Teddy: Yeah! Yes, yes, yes.

Mr. Eric: Okay, all right. Well, I am all ears. Whenever you are ready.

Teddy: I'm ready.

Mr. Eric: Okay, go ahead. So, why don't you do it like you would normal. So, say, "My name is Teddy."

Teddy: My name is Teddy.

Mr. Eric: And what's something you like?

Teddy: I guess I like, hmm. I like ninjas.

Mr. Eric: Ooh, okay. Great. And what's your What If question?

Teddy: What if ninjas could turn into animals?

Mr. Eric: Let me see if I got it right. His name is Teddy and he asks, "What if unicorns could turn into ninjas?"

Teddy: No! What if ninjas could turn into animals.

Mr. Eric: Oh, I'm sorry. Yes, exactly. So Teddy wants to know, "What if ninjas could turn into French fries?"

Teddy: No, into animals!

Mr. Eric: And French fries could turn into animals.

Teddy: No. No, ninjas could turn into animals!

Mr. Eric: Oh, gosh, Teddy. Why didn't you say so? Okay.

[Rising harp scale.]

Once upon a time, there was a young ninja named Teddy. And Teddy was a ninja in training. It meant he still had a lot to learn. It was actually his first day of ninja school. And what did he say, Teddy? What might... what did he say to his Mom and Dad ninja? Was he excited for ninja school?

Teddy: Yes.

Mr. Eric: Okay, very good.

Teddy Ninja: Mom! Dad! I'm so excited to go to ninja school!

Mr. Eric: Said Teddy. And his mother said:

Ninja Mom: Son, ninjas are not excitable. Ninjas are serious and silent. That is why your father never speaks, because he is such a good ninja.

Mr. Eric: Teddy's father said:

Ninja Dad: Mm-hmm.

Mr. Eric: And Teddy said.

Teddy Ninja: Oh, no, I know, I know. I mean, I'm really excited for ninja school, but when I get there I'm going to be super serious. I mean, here's my... I'm going to make a really serious noise.

Mr. Eric: What's a serious ninja noise? Can you think of one, Teddy?

Teddy: Rrrrrgh.

Teddy Ninja: Rrrrrgh.

Mr. Eric: And she said,

Ninja Mom: I think you are ready for ninja school.

Mr. Eric: And off Teddy went! He zipped all the way down to the ninja school and got to a great big wooden door. But he couldn't find a handle on the door. He said,

Teddy Ninja: Um, hello? I'm here for my first day of ninjagarten? Um, anyone there? Hello?

Mr. Eric: He knocked on the door. [Knocking sound] And the door knocked back.  
[Lower knocking sound]

Teddy Ninja: Uh, so, I don't see a handle on this door. I just, I want to come and study and be a ninja with you guys.

Mr. Eric: And then he heard a voice, as if from all around, and also in his head at the same time. And it said.

Voice: This is your first test.

Teddy Ninja: What? A test on the first day of school? That's no fair! Ugh. Ninjagarten, give me a break.

Mr. Eric: And he turned around to go.  
  
Teddy, do you want him to leave ninjagarten before his first day even starts?

Teddy: No.

Mr. Eric: So why don't you tell him what to do? What should he do?

Teddy: Stay.

Mr. Eric: How should he—okay, stay.

Teddy: He should probably punch through the door, actually.

Mr. Eric: Okay, okay.

Teddy Ninja: I know what to do! I'm going to stay because it feels like someone told me to. Someone named Teddy. And I know what else I'm going to do! I'm

going to use my ninja strength to punch right through this door.  
Aiiiiieeya! Oooh ow ow ow!

Okay, maybe I need to be a yellow belt ninja before I punch through doors. Ow ow ow.

Voice: You can do better than that, young Ninja Teddy.

Teddy Ninja: Oh, Ninjagarten, why you gotta be so tricky? Okay. I know what I'll do.

Mr. Eric: What's something else that he might do? I know he'll get it eventually, as long as he doesn't give up.

Teddy: He could climb up and whack the window with his nunchucks.

Mr. Eric: He says.

Teddy Ninja: I know! I'll climb up and I'll whack the window with my nunchucks.  
{Whooshing sound}

Mr. Eric: And he whipped out his nunchucks and he started climbing.

Teddy Ninja: Oh! You know, it's kind of hard to climb with nunchucks in your hands. Here, I'll stick them in my teeth. [Muffled] I really know what I'm doing climbing up.

And now just to whack the window! Wait a second. I don't see a window at all, it's just a solid wooden wall. But I'm pretty close to the top. Maybe if I use my nunchucks to—

Mr. Eric: [Whoosh!] And he whipped them right over and he got a good hold and then he did what every good ninja learns to do, he pulled up and did a ninja flip. Boom! And he landed on the other side with cat-like grace.

Teddy Ninja: Did I pass the test?

Voice: You passed the first test but you haven't passed the second test.

Teddy Ninja: What!? Two tests on my first day!? UGH. And where's the teachers. If I'm at ninjagarten, that means that there should be teachers here teaching me, right?

Mr. Eric: And then he heard:

Voice: Your teacher's right here.

Teddy Ninja: What? I don't see a teacher anywhere. Where is my teacher?

Voice: Keep looking.

Mr. Eric: He looked left, right, up. Which direction had he not looked? He looked left. He looked right. He looked up, but he didn't look...

Teddy: Down!

Mr. Eric: You're right!

Teddy Ninja: Oh, I haven't looked down.

Mr. Eric: Just at his feet he saw a very small creature that looked like it was dressed as a ninja. It was wearing a gi! What is a small creature you can think of, Teddy?

Teddy: A spider.

Mr. Eric: A spider. You're right. The spider said:  
  
Hello. You finally found me. You passed the second test. My name is Good Climber, and I teach all the finest ninjas in What If World. Are you such a ninja, Teddy?

Teddy: Yes.

Teddy Ninja: Uh, yeah!

Mr. Eric: [Laughs] Of course he said yes. He thought he was the greatest ninja ever. And Good Climber.

Teddy: He flipped himself over the fence, too!

Mr. Eric: He said,

Teddy Ninja: Yeah, I just flipped myself over a ten foot wooden wall without handholds. I think I'm shaping up to be the best ninja ever.

Mr. Eric: And Good Climber said,

Good Climber: Well, you are a good climber but you are not the best ninja yet.

Teddy Ninja: Aw, come on... then why am I in ninja school?

Good Climber: You are in ninjagarten in order to learn. Right now you have the potential to be the greatest ninja, but if you want to truly achieve that goal, you have to be like me. And then—

Mr. Eric: He turned into a different animal. What animal did he turn into this time? What kind of creature?

Teddy: A tiger.

Good Climber: And if you can master all the ninja styles, you can be a tiger! Grr! Or a spider.

Mr. Eric: And he whipped himself back into a spider.

Good Climber: Or even a giant—

Mr. Eric: What's a really big creature you can think of. Even bigger than a tiger.

Teddy: A cheetah.

Good Climber: Or even a cheetah!

Mr. Eric: And he turned into a spotted cheetah and started running all over where that big wooden wall was, encircling all of the ninja school. He ran this way and that, circling it faster and faster and faster.

Teddy Ninja: Okay! Okay, I get it. I've got a lot to learn before I can turn into an animal. So, why don't you start teaching me?

Mr. Eric: [Whoosh!] Good Climber said,

Good Climber: Very well. Your first lesson—

Mr. Eric: He was back in spider form now.

Good Climber: Your first lesson is to shoot webs from your hands.

Teddy Ninja: Ah, piece of cake. I can shoot webs from my hands, no problem! Sss!

[Sad trombone]

Um, hang on a second. [Clears throat] I just need to warm them up first.

Mr. Eric: And he shook his hands really fast.

Teddy Ninja: Okay. Ready? Ah-ssst! [Frustrated grunt] What's wrong with my hands? I could have sworn I used to know how to shoot webs.

Good Climber: Um, what's wrong with your hands is that they're not spider hands, Teddy.

Teddy Ninja: Oooh. I need spider hands. So in order to shoot webs, I have to turn into a spider.

Good Climber: Yes, indeed. Come back here when you can become a spider. Until then, I'm going to go hang out in my web. [Whoosh!]

Mr. Eric: And he jumped over to his web and just started hanging around.

Teddy Ninja: Aw, gee whiz. That's no fair. I thought teachers are supposed to teach.

Good Climber: That's right. So maybe you need to try something else.

Teddy Ninja: Try something else? I don't know what else to try. I tried just thinking about webs shooting out of my hands and it didn't work. What else could I possibly do?

Mr. Eric: Now, Teddy, you know that What If World is kind of like an imaginary place where almost anything's possible. So what do you think he might try next?

Teddy: He could try to turn into a spider.

Mr. Eric: Ah, very good. He says,

Teddy Ninja: Okay. I need to turn into a spider. I need to think spidery thoughts.

Mr. Eric: And he closed his eyes and he thought about spider webs and he thought about—what are things that spiders like, Teddy?

Teddy: I think they would like eating bugs.

Mr. Eric: And he thought about eating bugs.

Teddy Ninja: Mm, yummy delicious bugs.

Mr. Eric: And he thought about—can you think... do spiders like rock and roll music?

Teddy: Yeah.

Mr. Eric: And he thought about rock and roll music because he could always see spiders dancing on their webs whenever he played rock and roll music. And he thought really hard and suddenly—opened his eyes.

Teddy Ninja: Aw, man. It didn't work. Oh no, I'll never be able to shoot web. [Hissing noise]



Mr. Eric: He shot 40 feet of web right out of his hands.

Teddy Ninja: Wait a second! Those aren't my hands at all.

Mr. Eric: He looked down. It wasn't his hands, it was—do you know where spiders shoot web out of.

Teddy: Um, I think their behind.

Mr. Eric: You're absolutely right. It wasn't his hands, it was his bottom!

Teddy Ninja: Ah! I just shot webs out of my bottom. That felt really weird.

Mr. Eric: And Good Climber jumped out of his web.

Good Climber: Well done. You have learned how to turn into a spider. You are going to be a wonderful ninja.

Mr. Eric: But just then, an adversary showed up. Now, ninjas help protect people, right?

Teddy: Right.

Mr. Eric: Yeah. So, hmm. Is there anyone or anything that these ninjas might need to protect people from?

Teddy: Bad guys, super villains, stuff like that.

Mr. Eric: Cool. Okay. So, he says,

Good Climber: Wait. I sense a presence. There is a super villain afoot.

Teddy Ninja: What? Super villains. There's no such thing as super villains.

Mr. Eric: [Thunder crashes] He heard lightning strike and the sky went dark all over the ninjagarten school.

Teddy Ninja: Um, I don't know if I'm ready for this lesson yet.

Mr. Eric: And Good Climber said.

Good Climber: This isn't a lesson, young one. We are being overtaken by the dreaded—

Mr. Eric: Hmm. What's a super hero, or a super villain. What's a silly name?

Teddy: Gargus.

Mr. Eric: That's an awesome name. Can you say that again, one more time? The Dreaded—

Teddy: Gargus!

Good Climber: The Dreaded Gargus! Aah!

Mr. Eric: Wait, who's the Dreaded Gargus?

Good Climber: Gargus is a creature that was once a ninja. He learned how to turn into other animals, but he didn't want to stop there. He wanted to turn into everything. I warned him that if you turn into things that aren't alive you can start to lose your mind! But he did it anyway. Now he can turn into lightning and thunder and wind and rain and all the elements. And he is very difficult to defeat.

Mr. Eric: And they heard a booming voice all over the schoolyard.

Gargus: You mean impossible to defeat-eat-eat-eat.

Mr. Eric: And Teddy said,

Teddy Ninja: Uhh, I don't know what I'm gonna do? I know! I'll shoot web out of my butt.

Gargus: UGH!

Mr. Eric: And he shot web in every direction he could trying to catch Gargus in a spider web. And in fact, he did wrap it around one bolt of lightning, but it blasted right through it. And then he felt a roaring wind pushing him over back to the wooden wall.

Teddy Ninja: I'm too small to stand up against this wind!

Mr. Eric: What did he turn into? What's something so big and heavy that wind wouldn't blow it away.

Teddy: Cheetah.

Mr. Eric: A cheetah. He said,

Teddy Ninja: I don't know, maybe I could turn into a—

Mr. Eric: And he thought about things that cheetahs like. Long naps in the sun. What else would a cheetah like?

Teddy: Running really fast from something that wants to eat it or get it.

Mr. Eric: Running really really fast away from even bigger predators and—he opened his eyes and he was running. He was running not just 60 miles per hour. Because the wind was blowing he was able to run 100 miles per hour and he ran so fast that suddenly his paws were in the air and he was running on the wind itself.

And Gargus said,

Gargus: Who, ugh, get off of me! That tickles. Ooh, hoo hoo.

Mr. Eric: And Gargus turned into—water. [Whoosh] And the rain started falling and he couldn't run on the rain. He started slipping and sliding and—

Teddy Ninja: Whooooo! Mraow. Cheetahs don't like getting wet!

Mr. Eric: Actually, a lot of cheetahs are pretty good swimmers, but he thought—

Teddy Ninja: What am I going to do now?

Mr. Eric: Between those wooden walls, the water filled higher and higher like it was a giant bath.

Teddy Ninja: Hm, if I'm in the water, what kind of animal could I turn into to defeat Gargus?

Teddy: A shark.

Teddy Ninja: A shark! That's it! Ooh!

Mr. Eric: He thought about things that sharks like. Shark like swimming endlessly, they like... what do they like?

Teddy: Eating fish.

Mr. Eric: They like eating fish.

Teddy Ninja: Mm, yum, fish.

Mr. Eric: And they like—is there anything else? What kind of music do sharks like?

Teddy: Old school music.

Mr. Eric: And they like old school music. So suddenly he heard a funky beat. [Funk music plays in the background]

Teddy Ninja: Hey, that's perfect shark music. I wonder if it—

Mr. Eric: And he opened his eyes and he saw his big shark mouth already wide open. Wow, that's cool! And he bit into the water.

Gargus: Yeow! Don't bite me!

Mr. Eric: Said Gargus.

Gargus: Get out of here!

Mr. Eric: And the water started spinning around like a whirlwind. And Teddy said,

Teddy Ninja: Um, you know, I feel like I'm doing all the work myself here. I turned into a great white shark and a cheetah, and Good Climber, could you please help?

Mr. Eric: Good Climber suddenly said,

Good Climber: Oh...

Mr. Eric: Hmm. What's a really big sea mammal that makes a sort of song? It's one of the biggest things alive.

Teddy: A great white whale!

Mr. Eric: You're right. He was a whale. He was a big white whale.

Good Climber: [Whale noises]

Mr. Eric: And he splashed into the water and suddenly all the water shot out of the school in every direction, and Teddy was going around.

Teddy Ninja: Yeah, you get out of here.

Mr. Eric: He slapped his tail this way and that. He wiggled his fins and gave the water one good bite on the bottom of the water on its way out.

Gargus: Ow! Ooh ooh! Let me go!

Mr. Eric: And the water shot out and now Gargus was all the way outside of ninjagarten. And Teddy said,

Teddy Ninja: And stay out, Gargus!

Gargus: I just, I'm sorry. I-I-I was so mean. I just, I can't figure out how to turn back into a human anymore and I just feel like I'm going nutso futso. I can't—

Mr. Eric: And Good Climber said,

Good Climber: Hmm. I wonder if Teddy could teach your how to turn human again.

Mr. Eric: Teddy, what should he think about if he wants to turn human? What are some things that you like, Teddy?

Teddy: Um, I like—

Mr. Eric: Do you like robots.

Teddy: Yeah, I like dragons, I like unicorns, I like—

Mr. Eric: So Teddy said,

Teddy Ninja: Why don't you think about things you like, like robots and dragons and unicorns and singing and laughing and hugging and—sniffing your feet.

Mr. Eric: And Gargus said,

Gargus: Oh! I haven't sniffed my feet in so long. I haven't had feet in ages!

Mr. Eric: And when Gargus opened his eyes he was just a tiny old man.

Gargus: Hooray! I'm an old man again!

Mr. Eric: And he sat right down and took off his sandals and—

Gargus: [Sniffing, sighing] Ah, that's a good foot. Thank you Teddy. You want to come here and smell these feet?

Mr. Eric: What did Teddy say?

Teddy: Yes.

Mr. Eric: [Laughs] Teddy said,

Teddy Ninja: Ah, sure, why not?

Mr. Eric: This time he didn't have to climb the wall, he just had to turn into a frog and boing! And he jumped over to the other side. Then he turned into something with a really good nose for sniffing. Like what?

Teddy: A kitty.

Mr. Eric: And he turned into a kitty and—

Teddy Ninja: [Meowing]

Mr. Eric: And then he turned back into Teddy.

Teddy Ninja: That is a really good stinky foot! Thanks Gargus.

Mr. Eric: Gargus said,

Gargus: No, thank you! I spent so many years as the wind and the rain and the lightning I forgot who I was. And now to smell my own feet again! I want to be a teacher once more.

Mr. Eric: And then, suddenly a door opened where there hadn't been one before and he was able to walk slowly into ninjagarten where Good Climber patted him on the back and said,

Good Climber: Welcome back, old friend. It'll be good to teach our class again.

Mr. Eric: And Teddy gave them all a deep bow. The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: How'd you like your story, Teddy?

Teddy: Good.

Mr. Eric: Yeah.

Teddy: Thank you.

Mr. Eric: Oh, you're welcome. Thank you for being my first special kid guest. It's amazing. Teddy?

Teddy: Thank you!

Mr. Eric: You're so welcome.

I'd like to thank Karen Marshall, my editor and producer. Craig Martinson who made our awesome theme song. Jason O'Keefe for our new artwork, and my nephew Teddy for being my inspiration. Not to mention the funniest five year old I've ever known.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme song plays.]

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