

Podcast: [What If World](#)

Episode: 48: What if kids could turn into Strep fighting ninjas?

File Length: 17:42

Transcription by Keffy

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 question from Jude.

Jude: Hi, my name is Jude and I have PANDAS. I like myself and What If World.

Jude's Mom: My question is...

Jude: My question is what if PANDAS kids could turn into strep-fighting ninjas.

Jude's Mom: Jude suffers from PANDAS, which is sort of an auto-immune disorder
that makes strep bacteria really really icky for PANDAS kids. Okay, thank
you for What If World, we love it. Do we love it?

Jude: Yeah, we do!

Jude's Mom: Okay, bye!

Jude: Bye.

Mr. Eric: Wow, Jude! What a great question. I love the questions that force me to
learn something and I had never even heard of PANDAS before hearing
this question. So, Jude, what if PANDAS kids could turn into
strep-fighting ninjas? Let's find out.

[Rising harp scale.]

Once upon a time there was a boy named Jude, and he had the feeling
that he had just woken up, but also he knew he hadn't been asleep.

Mojo Gogo: Jude, thank goodness, you're all right.

Mr. Eric: Said Mojo Gogo, his turtle friend.

Phoebe Falcon: That was a big bout with PANDAS.

Mr. Eric: Cried Phoebe Falcon, flying over his bed.

Veronica Martian: You can say that again.

Mr. Eric: Said Veronica Martian.

Jude: Huh? I feel fine, guys. My PANDAS is in remission.

Phoebe Falcon: It is now, but what if it comes back?

Mr. Eric: Phoebe Falcon asked.

Mojo Gogo: Yeah, and medicine doesn't grow on trees.

Mr. Eric: Said Mojo Gogo.

Mojo Gogo: Except some. But then it has to be refined.

Mr. Eric: They were in a cozy little cabin in the woods and Jude sprung out out of bed to show all his friends how healthy he was.

Jude: See? I can run. I can jump. I can flip.

Mr. Eric: He tried a running, front hand spring and sprung right into a bookcase! [CRASH]. He rolled himself out of the way just in time.

Veronica Martian: You shouldn't be doing flips indoors.

Mr. Eric: Said Veronica Martian.

Jude: I'm sorry,

Mr. Eric: Said Jude.

Jude: I've just been training to be a ninja so I can fight the strep.

Mr. Eric: Mojo slowly sauntered over to the bookcase and pushed it back up with his turtle shell. Veronica and Phoebe helped to right it.

Mojo Gogo: I don't think you can use ninja moves on strep.

Mr. Eric: Said Mojo.

Jude: I know we can't yet. But that's why Dr. Martian's here. Right Veronica?

Veronica Martian: I didn't want to ruin the surprise, but yes. My shrink ray is operational.

Phoebe Falcon: Shrink ray!

Mr. Eric: Said Phoebe, diving onto Veronica's shoulder.

Phoebe Falcon: Show me where it is! I want to shrink away all the strep.

Jude: No, no no!

Mr. Eric: Said Jude.

Jude: The shrink ray's not for the strep. IT's for us. Now, I know it might be scary to go fight strep, but—

Mojo Gogo: I'm in!

Phoebe Falcon: Me, too!

Veronica Martian: I have to be there to make sure the device works properly. And also, I want to help.

Jude: Oh, that was a lot easier to convince you all of than I thought.

Mr. Eric: And Veronica Martian reached into her jacket pocket.

Veronica Martian: Behold.

Mr. Eric: And she pulled out nothing.

Phoebe Falcon: That's not funny.

Mr. Eric: Complained Phoebe.

Mojo Gogo: Is that something only warm-blooded creatures can see?

Mr. Eric: Asked Mojo. But Jude was excited.

Jude: Wow, you really did it.

Veronica Martian: Yes, isn't it marvelous?

Jude: You see, guys.

Mr. Eric: Explained Jude.

Jude: The shrink ray—

Mojo Gogo: Can shrink anything except for itself.

Phoebe Falcon: So she had to make it incredibly small, or else how would we use it when we were small.

Jude: Uh, yeah. Gosh, I thought that would be harder to explain.

Mr. Eric: And Veronica Martian took a tiny pin out of her other jacket pocket and aimed it for that invisible shrink ray in the middle of her hand. [Beep!] And all four of them were incredibly small. The bed Jude had been lying in looked like the biggest mountain in the world. And the wooden floor of the cabin seemed like an endless expanse.

Veronica Martian: Thank goodness it works on living things.

Mr. Eric: Said Veronica.

Phoebe Falcon: Wait... you hadn't tested it on living creatures yet?

Mr. Eric: Asked Phoebe.

Veronica Martian: That would have been rude so I tested it on us, instead.

Mojo Gogo: Um... shouldn't you have tested it when we were closer to some strep?

Mr. Eric: Asked Mojo.

Jude: Uh, yeah. I'm all better and the house is really clean. Why don't you just unshrink us until we find someone who's sick?

Veronica Martian: Unshrink you?

Mr. Eric: Asked Veronica, holding up the shrink ray that now fit right in her hand.

Mojo Gogo: Oh dear.

Phoebe Falcon: So now I'm a falcon that's smaller than a fly forever?

Veronica Martian: Not forever. I can make you much smaller if you want. I'll just use the shrink ray again.

All: No!

Veronica Martian: Okay, fine. You What If Worldians are so touchy.

Mr. Eric: [Doorbell] Ding dong! Someone was at the door to the cabin. They all started rushing towards the door, but it was so far away at their current size.

Zach: Hey, Jude? It's me, Zach. My parents drove me over here to bring you some lentil soup. We heard you were sick.

Jude: Hold on, Zach, I'm coming!

Mr. Eric: Jude was shouting at the top of his lungs, but do you think Zach could hear someone so small?

Zach: Jude, it's cold out here, come get your soup. [Achoo!]

Jude: Veronica, did you hear that sneeze.

Veronica Martian: I did. My strep detector does sense some bacteria coming from Zach. But don't worry, he doesn't have PANDAS.

Mojo Gogo: That doesn't matter.

Jude: Strep is contagious! Besides, Zach's my friend. I may have got him sick in the first place.

Mr. Eric: [Repeated doorbell rings] Dingdongdingdongdingdongdingdong.
They heard Zach stomping his feet outside.

Zach: I'm sorry, Jude. It's cold out here. I'm just gonna leave your soup.

Mr. Eric: They were all running as fast as they could, but only Phoebe Falcon had any chance of flying to the door in time.

Phoebe Falcon: Veronica, you said that shrink ray can make us all smaller?

Veronica Martian: Yes. There's no theoretical limit to how small we get. But if we get any smaller than this, it will be very difficult.

Jude: It doesn't matter, it's our only chance. You've got to make me, you, and Mojo even smaller. Now.

Mr. Eric: And she shrunk the three of them down to about a quarter of that size.

Jude: Now, Phoebe, come pick us up!

Phoebe Falcon: Oh!

Mr. Eric: And Phoebe swooped down, picked up her three friends and zipped right through the keyhole just as Zach was turning around to go.

Phoebe Falcon: He's getting close to the car. What do I do?

Veronica Martian: We've got to fly inside in order to battle his bacteria.

Jude: Listen Phoebe, I know it's not going to be pleasant, but you're going to have to fly right into—

Phoebe Falcon: His nose. I understand.

Mojo Gogo: And through all that gloop and glorp. It's the only way.

Mr. Eric: And Phoebe went zoom-splat! Right into Zach's drippy nose.

Jude: Wow.

Mr. Eric: Said Jude.

Mojo Gogo: You thought it'd be harder to convince us to do this, huh?

Mr. Eric: Asked Mojo.

Phoebe Falcon: We're full of surprises, aren't we?

Mr. Eric: Asked Phoebe.

Jude: Yeah. I'm really surprised you didn't just fly through his ear. That would have worked, too.

All: Oh...

Mr. Eric: And Phoebe came down to perch on a glorp-free nose hair.

Phoebe Falcon: Well let's get some of this stuff off of me?

Mojo Gogo: How will we know if any of it's strep?

Veronica Martian: It will be difficult.

Jude: What about your strep detector?

Veronica Martian: It only determines proximity. It cannot pinpoint location.

Mojo Gogo: Well, what's it saying now?

Veronica Martian: Let me just desplurg it a little bit.

Mr. Eric: And she wiped off the detector and pressed a button. Beep beep beepbeepbeepbeepbeep!

Veronica Martian: There is strep bacteria less than one centimeter to the north, south, east, west, to the up and to the down.

Mr. Eric: And out from all the green gloop and glunk schlepped one yellowish green blob.

Strep: Aah, new children for us to infect.

Mr. Eric: The strep creature was every bit as big as Phoebe, meaning it was four times bigger than the rest of them.

Jude: Hey, Veronica,

Mr. Eric: Said Jude.

Jude: Can you help this strep pick on someone it's own size?

Veronica Martian: I don't understand.

Jude: I mean by shrinking it to our size.

Veronica Martian: Oh, now I understand.

Strep: [Laughing]

Mr. Eric: The giant yellow-green pile of bacteria bowled ever closer to them.

Jude: Um, Veronica? Any second now.

Veronica Martian: What's going to happen any second now?

Jude: You're going to shrink the giant strep bacteria, like I asked you to?

Veronica Martian: No, you asked if I could.

Jude: Well, can you?

Veronica Martian: No. It only works on willing subjects.

Mojo Gogo: Well, that's useless.

Veronica Martian: No, it's ethical.

Phoebe Falcon: Guys, now isn't really the time for an ethics lecture!

Strep: I'll say! [SPLORCH]

Mr. Eric: And a wave of glop splashed over them.

Jude: Oh no, I don't want to get strep again!

Veronica Martian: Don't worry. You're too small for this bacteria to affect you on a cellular level.

Strep: But you're just about the right size for smooshing!

Mr. Eric: And the strep bacteria rose up and crashed down over them again.

Jude: All right, ninjas. It's time we got to fight back. Hi-yah!

Mr. Eric: Legs and arms flying in a blur, Jude swiped off every bit of strep bacteria in an instant.

Jude: Phoebe, wings!

Mr. Eric: And the falcon started batting her gigantic wings, making a little whirlwind inside of Zach's nostril that pushed the strep bacteria deep back into a forest of nose hair.

Strep: You will never defeat me!

Mr. Eric: Shouted the strep, its voice echoing through the cavernous nose.

Jude: Mojo, shield!

Mr. Eric: Cried Jude. And Mojo jumped into Jude's arms and turtled up tight just as—

Strep: BLEAAAAAH.

Mr. Eric: A stream of yellow-green shot straight for the young ninja. CHING! And it reflected right off the turtle's hard shell.

Jude: Veronica? Shrink ray.

Veronica Martian: On who?

Jude: On me.

All: Huh? Why?

Jude: Strep, you don't know what it's like to be sick, do you?

Strep: Yeah, it means I get to ride around on gloop and glork and maybe even infect others.

Jude: But you know how we feel? Do you know what getting sick is like for a kid?

Veronica Martian: What does this have to do with me shrinking you, Jude?

Jude: Well, if you make me small enough, I can infect strep on a cellular level.

Veronica Martian: But I'd have to shrink you down to an atomic size.

Mojo Gogo: We might not be able to find you later.

Strep: Why would you do that to yourself. Don't you just want to get bigger and more powerful?

Jude: No, I like myself. And I'll keep improving no matter what happens to me.

Strep: How?

Jude: By believing in myself and the people around me.

Strep: Believing in your ability to make them sick? Now I understand. You'll make me sick, and then you'll make them sick, and then you'll be the—

Phoebe Falcon: Wow, you really are thick!

Mr. Eric: Cried Phoebe Falcon.

Jude: Veronica, use the shrink ray.

Mr. Eric: And Veronica set the dial to atom sized and pointed it back at Jude.

Strep: Kid, wait. Don't shrink yourself into nothing just to teach me a lesson.

Jude: Why not?

Strep: Well, I like you.

Veronica Martian: Jude, our battle in this nostril has tickled Zach's nose.

Jude: That means...

Strep: A thousand more of my not so little friends are dripping their way here.

Mojo Gogo: I'll hold them off. You all get out of here.

Mr. Eric: Said Mojo Gogo.

Jude: No, Mojo. We're doing this together.

Phoebe Falcon: Besides, turtles don't make very good ninjas.

Strep: Yeah, the idea of a ninja turtle is... pretty ridiculous when you think about it.

Jude: Strep, if you like me, will you help us?

Strep: Why would I do that?

Veronica Martian: You like Jude because he likes himself.

Strep: Yeah?

Mojo Gogo: Helping others makes you like yourself more.

Strep: Oh no, I can't like myself. I'm a bacterial infection.

Mr. Eric: And just then—

Zach: ACHOO!-OO!-OO! [echoing]

Mr. Eric: Zach must have sneezed. But from inside his nose it felt like a hurricane. And all of them had to cling to nose hairs for dear life! A [unclear] of strep started rushing towards them.

Streps: Hey, hey! Mucus! Slow down.

Mr. Eric: And suddenly Zach gave a sniff.

Strep: All right, strep. I know you're all hidden in there. Come out.

Mr. Eric: And little yellow, green, and blue blobs started popping out of that stream of gross glorp.

Strep: These PANDAS ninjas have helped me see a new light.

Strep 2: I don't get it. Where are their spots.

Jude: No, PANDAS is a condition.

Strep 3: Well, even so. It would make more sense if at least one of you was an actual panda.

Mojo Gogo: Well, I'm a turtle.

Streps: [Laugh]

Strep 3: A ninja turtle? Now I've seen everything. Well, actually I've never seen anything outside of Zach's body.

Strep: No, all of you quiet down. I've discovered something much better than making children sick.

Strep 2: No way.

Strep 4: Huh?

Strep 2: I don't believe it.

Strep: It's called liking yourself.

Strep 3: I don't know, I live in mucus.

Strep 2: Yeah, your favorite holiday is getting sneezed onto people's faces.

Strep 4: Besides, we got no where to go except onto other people.

Jude: Well, that's not entirely true.

Mr. Eric: Said Jude.

Jude: Veronica has a shrink ray.

Veronica Martian: That's right. I can make all of you so small that you have your own little world. I could even bring you to Mars and keep you safe there. None of us are susceptible to strep.

Strep: Doesn't that sound great? Anything's better than this gloopy life.

Strep 3: Hey, let's spread the word.

Strep 2: And by spread, we mean, not making people sick?

Mojo Gogo: This might take a while.

Mr. Eric: Said Mojo. And it did. In fact, it took just long enough for Veronica to call another space ship down from Mars. When all the bacteria were together and ready, she shrunk them down until they were so small they couldn't even make a caterpillar sick. Then she gave them their very own space ship, that felt as big as a planet to them.

Jude: All right. That's one kid cured! About how many others have strep?

Veronica Martian: About 3 million a year in North Whatever alone.

Jude: Oh boy.

Mojo Gogo: Slow and steady wins the race.

Phoebe Falcon: But maybe slow and steady and small makes the race a little too long?

Mr. Eric: Asked Phoebe.

Strep 2: Well, we'll help, too.

Mr. Eric: Said the ship full of uninfectious bacteria. On this ship, we can reach a thousand kids a day.

Jude: Well, if any of them want to become PANDAS ninjas, send them our way, okay.

Strep: Sure thing!

Mr. Eric: Jude heard from the space ship as it zipped away at lightning speed.

Mojo Gogo: Veronica, when you called for that space ship, you didn't happen to ask for an unshrink ray, did you?

Veronica Martian: No. But I did something better.

Phoebe Falcon: What?

Mr. Eric: Asked Phoebe Falcon.

Veronica Martian: I installed a bigify button while I was waiting for them to get there.

Jude: Uh, shouldn't we wait until we're out of Zach's nose before—

All: [Screaming]

Zach: AAAACHOOOO! [echoes]

Mr. Eric: And that was the sneeze that shook What If World. But that's a story for another time.

The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

All right, Jude. I hope you liked your story. I'd like to thank Karen Marshall, my editor, producer, and wife. Craig Martinson who wrote our fantastic theme song. Jason O'Keeffe for his awesome artwork and his

great speech at my wedding. And all you kids at home who like yourself
enough to help others.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme song plays.]

©2017, Eric O'Keefe/What If World