

Podcast: [What If World](#)

Episode: 60: What if dinosaurs and chickens could turn into anything (plus Whendiana & the Learninator)

File Length: 14:19

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. Okay, okay. Let's hear the question.

Hendricks:             Hi, my name is Hendricks and I'm from New Jersey. And my What If question is what if dinosaurs and chickens could turn into anything? My favorite thing is dinosaurs and chickens and trees.

Mr. Eric:                Wow, Hendricks. What a cool question. And you know what, I think I want to add even more dinosaur action to your great idea with a second question from Micah.

Micah:                   My name is Micah and I like dinosaurs. What if Whendiana Joan found a triceratops and invented lemonade to make it talk, plus Learninator? Thank you.

Mr. Eric:                Wow, Micah, you did a great job. So we've got transforming dinosaurs and chickens, trains, Whendiana Joan, some lemonade that can make you talk and a triceratops. Plus the Learninator. Okay, let's see if I can squeeze all that in.

[Rising harp scale.]

Whendiana Joan, a bit older, now, many of her best adventures behind her, was riding a train along with the Learninator.

Learninator:           You know that I can instantly transport us anywhere and any time.

Mr. Eric:                Said the Learninator.

Whendiana:            I know that, Learninator.

Mr. Eric:                Replied Whendiana Joan.

Learninator:           Then why do you insist that we take this slow train?

Whendiana: Because rushing to get some place isn't always the safest way. Or have you forgotten?

Learninator: Wow. Rip a few holes in the space-time continuum, and you never live it down.

Whendiana: Besides, I like trains.

Mr. Eric: The train pulled into the next station and they heard over the intercom.

Intercom: Dinorama crossing.

Mr. Eric: And dinosaurs of all shapes and sizes started piling onto the train leaving very little space in the car for Whendiana and the Learninator. A little raptor skittered across her lap, a pterodactyl winged over her hair and a giant triceratops was trying to push its way all the way back.

Whyla: Excuse me. Pardon, pardon. I'm sorry.

Mr. Eric: She was a young lady! Triceratops grow up fast and none of the other dinosaurs seemed to like her very much.

Raptor: Hey, you stepped on my toe!

Mr. Eric: Cried the raptor.

Pteradactyl: Ah, you're always in the way!

Mr. Eric: Said the pterodactyl.

Whyla: I'm sorry! I'll just get back here and be out of everyone's way.

Stegosaurus: Why don't you just turn back into a chicken?

Whyla: Oh, you'd like that, Stegany. Then all the carnivores would try to eat me.

Mr. Eric: Whendiana gathered these were all young dinosaurs headed back from school. As the triceratops squished past her, Whendiana tapped it lightly on the shoulder.

Whyla: Wow, a human lady.

Mr. Eric: Said the triceratops.

Whendiana: I was going to say the same about a talking, shape shifting triceratops.

Mr. Eric: Said Whendiana.

Learninator: I would have thought you'd been wowed by me, a perfect specimen of ingenuity and chroooooome.

Whyla: Oh, sorry. I didn't notice you.

Learninator: But I'm so shiny I have to wear sunglasses. Oh, why even exist?

Whendiana: Don't pay him any mind.

Mr. Eric: Said Whendiana.

Whendiana: Why are you squeezing in like this when you could just turn into a little chicken?

Whyla: Because when I'm a triceratops, their mean words can't get through my thick skin.

Whendiana: Oh, dear. How rude I've been. My name's Whendiana Joan and this is my friend the Learninator.

Whyla: Oh, I'm Whyceratops?

Whendiana: Is that really your name?

Whyla: What's wrong with it?

Whendiana: Oh, nothing. It's just a little unusual that two chickens would name their daughter Whyceratops.

Whyla: Well, you're right. It's Whyla.

Whendiana: Whyla, that's a beautiful name. Did you know that the Learninator and I are time travelers?

Whyla: Oh, wow.

Learninator: Finally, someone's impressed by me.

Whendiana: And I once met a dinosaur who could shape shift, just like you.

Whyla: Wow! I've heard that shape shifting chickens evolved from shape shifting dinosaurs.

Whendiana: That's true, but that's not really what this story's about. It all started when I was much younger. I'd just teamed up with the Learninator and was still getting used to this whole time travel thing. Come to think of it, I was riding along this very same path.

[Rising harp scale.]

- Mr. Eric: A younger Whendiana Joan, still wearing her explorer hat and her adventuring leather jacket, was indeed riding along this very same path. Only, there were no train tracks, just a long dusty trail that her tiny chrome train chugged along over.
- Learninator: This is embarrassing.
- Mr. Eric: Said the Learninator.
- Learninator: I'm a marvel of ingenuity and chrome.
- Whendiana: And you make a very cute choo-choo train.
- Mr. Eric: Said Whendiana.
- Learninator: You know I could instantly transport you—
- Whendiana: Shh.
- Mr. Eric: She pushed a button on her little chrome trainator and he slowed to a stop, his steam engine quieting.
- Whendiana: We're not here to zip around all over the place. We're trying to find that shape shifter.
- Learninator: This is a poor use of my time travel ability. There is hardly any life on this planet to Learninate from.
- Whendiana: Hush, did you hear that?
- Mr. Eric: A white streak skittered across their path.
- Learninator: Please turn me back from a choo choo, I'm scared and I can't reach my own button.
- Whendiana: Oh, fine, you big fusspot.
- Mr. Eric: And she hopped off the little chrome choo choo train, pressed the tiny button and as the little chrome trainator turned into a big metal Learninator, it seemed to startle what ever was out there.
- Creature: Whaaa!
- Mr. Eric: This time a flutter of gray whizzed right above their heads, passing over like a dark cloud.

Learninator: Whendiana, I need a hug.

Whendiana: Now you're a giant robot with metal skin. What are you afraid of?

Learninator: Like every robot, I am afraid of rust and also chickens.

Mr. Eric: And finally they got a clean look at the little shape shifter. Right now, it was a little sandy colored chicken, blending into their path almost perfectly.

Whyla: What? A chicken?

Mr. Eric: Back in the present, Whyla interrupted the older Whendiana.

Whendiana: Yes, a chicken.

Whyla: But I thought you said this story was about a dinosaur?

Whendiana: I haven't finished the story yet.

Learninator: Please let her get through this, it's the scariest part.

Whyla: Are you still afraid of chickens?

Mr. Eric: Asked the young triceratops.

Learninator: That was a long time ago.

Mr. Eric: And Whendiana whispered.

Whendiana: That means yes.

Whyla: [Giggles]

Whendiana: But let me finish the story.

Mr. Eric: And the big, modern train they were riding faded away.

We see the young Whendiana standing on the sandy path, a frightened Learninator cowering behind her and the sandy-colored chicken stalked forward, turning into a big, black rooster.

Rooster: Buckaaaaaaah.

Mr. Eric: It flapped out its wings threateningly.

Whendiana: We mean you no harm.

Mr. Eric: Said the young Whendiana.

Learninator: Don't let it near me. One tiny feather could clog up my instruments.

Rooster: Caaaw?

Mr. Eric: The big rooster didn't seem to understand them. It just kept flapping its wings and taking little hops forward.

Whendiana: We're just trying to help.

Mr. Eric: Said Whendiana.

Whendiana: You're the only living thing for miles in any direction.

Mr. Eric: And she gestured out to the horizon. In her time, there were roads and houses, buildings and power lines. But here, it was just wind and grass and stone and sun.

Rooster: Uhhhhh...

Mr. Eric: Whendiana stepped forward and the black-feathered rooster turned into a fiery red hen. Then a blue-feathered baby chick that tried to squeeze into a nearby burrow.

Whendiana: I don't think he can understand me. In our time, all dinosaurs can talk.

Learninator: Then maybe we need to teach it.

Mr. Eric: Said the Learninator, giving Whendiana an idea.

Whendiana: You know what? This is the perfect time for me to try my linguinade.

Learninator: Good idea. You should explode the chicken.

Whendiana: Not ling-grenade! Linguinade. It's a lemonade that teaches you how to talk.

Learninator: But if you give the chicken the power of speech, it could one day come to rule the world.

Mr. Eric: But Whendiana was already mixing together the lemonade with a few special ingredients.

Whendiana: Or maybe we'll give its kind a chance to survive in this big, wide wilderness.

Mr. Eric: She said as she worked. When the linguinade was finished, she poured a little drop in front of the burrow where the tiny blue chick had hidden.

Chick: Tweet, tweettweettweet.

Mr. Eric: It sang hungrily when it saw the sugary yellow water and quickly slurped it up. Then it became a spotted hen and started pecking toward Whendiana for more.

Whendiana: Okay, I'm glad you like it.

Mr. Eric: Said Whendiana, pouring the linguinade out in a long stream that the hen quickly slurped up, becoming a rooster. Then a turkey. Then a raptor. Then an ostrich. Then a... rhinoceros? Then a three-horned rhinoceros, and finally—

Whyla: A triceratops!

Mr. Eric: And they were back in the present again. The big, modern train making another stop.

Announcer: T-Rex Avenue.

Mr. Eric: A few dinosaurs trotted and flew off the train. But all the rest seemed to be pulling in closer and closer to Whendiana, listening to her story.

Learninator: Do some of you live at T-Rex Express.

Raptor: We'd kind of like to hear the rest of the story.

Mr. Eric: Said the raptor.

Pterodactyl: If it's all the same to you.

Mr. Eric: Said the pterodactyl, who'd come to perch on Whyla's wide triceratops shoulder without even realizing it.

Raptor: Did the potion work?

Whyla: Is that how dinosaurs first learned to talk?

Whendiana: Well, come closer, and I'll tell the rest.

Mr. Eric: And the big train faded away.

And young Whendiana was looking up at a big triceratops who'd just finished drinking the last of the linguinade.

Glyceratops: What's happening to me?

Whendiana: I've just taught you how to talk.

Learninator: Why were you being a scary chicken when you're really a harmless triceratops.

Glyceratops: Because I don't want to be a dinosaur.

Whendiana: But why not? Everyone loves dinosaurs. I know it's hard to believe, but I'm from a time when dinosaurs roam the earth and everyone gets along.

Glyceratops: Are you sure? Because right now, dinosaurs are nearly extinct and it makes people afraid of us, like we have some disease.

Whendiana: Well, you've got nothing to worry about. You're just the first dinosaur of many. I know it for a fact.

Glyceratops: Then you need to get your facts straight because I'm really the last dinosaur.

All Listeners: Huh? HUH? Wha?

Learninator: Shhh. Let her finish the story.

Whendiana: But I taught you to talk.

Mr. Eric: Said Whendiana.

Whendiana: We're making history right now. We can still save the dinosaurs.

Glyceratops: You didn't teach me how to talk. You just helped me remember. When do you think you are, time traveler?

Mr. Eric: Folks at home, have you figured it out?

Whendiana: I'm in the past. You're one of the first dinosaurs.

Mr. Eric: And the triceratops swung one of his giant horns right past her, turning up a pile of sand to reveal a little rusted sign. Whendiana bent to uncover the rest before reading the sign.

Whendiana: T-Rex Avenue.

Glyceratops: You're from my history books, Whendiana Joan.

Mr. Eric: The triceratops said.



Whendiana: But that's impossible. The future's a better place. We learned time travel. How could this happen?

Glyceratops: Chickens and dinosaurs never really got along. Then the haves were quarreling with the have nots until they all became has beens.

Mr. Eric: Whendiana looked around again at the stone and sand. Now she started to see the little specks of rust. The little traces of the world that once was.

Learninator: Wow. I've really got to recalibrate my time travel engines.

Whendiana: You think, Learninator?

Glyceratops: Well, if you can manage, go back and see if you can save some of this.

Mr. Eric: Then without another word, the triceratops took off at a gallop, turning into a rooster, then a hen, then a flying turkey, then a soaring pterodactyl, and then a distant speck.

Whendiana: But wait, I never even learned your name.

Learninator: Whendiana, we've got to go. We are in the wrong time.

Mr. Eric: Bursts of silvery blue light were already sparking off of the Learninator. Whendiana was calling out to the distant pterodactyl, but the Learninator took her hand and they both disappeared.

Whyla: That's it?

Mr. Eric: Cried Whyla. They were back on the train and back in the present. All the other dinosaurs packed into the tiny car were wide-eyed with dismay.

Learninator: Not every story can be happy.

Mr. Eric: Said the Learninator.

Raptor: But surely we can change that future.

Pterodactyl: Yeah, I don't want to be extinct.

Whendiana: Then break out of your dinosaur world and start meeting some chickens and humans and fairies and pirates.

Mr. Eric: And Whyla walked up to Whendiana's ankle. She'd taken the form of a fluffy blue and gray chicken. It suited her.

Whyla: Thank you, Whendiana.

Mr. Eric: Said the little chicken.

Whendiana: You're wel—

Learninator: Who let a chicken on this train? I'm out of here.

Mr. Eric: And Whendiana and the Learninator disappeared in a flash of silvery blue light.

The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

All right, Hendricks and Micah. I hope you liked your story. I'd like to thank Karen Marshall O'Keeffe, my editor and producer. Craig Martinson for our awesome theme song, Jason O'Keeffe for our ongoing artwork. And all you kids at home who don't pretend to be someone else. The real you is the one worth getting to know.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme song plays.]